THE LADIES' CALLING.

IN TWO PARTS.

By the Author of the WHOLE DUTY OF MAN, &c.

FAVOUR IS DECEITFUL, AND BEAUTY IS VAIN: BUT A WOMAN THAT FEARETH THE LORD, SHE SHALL BE PRAISED, PROV. XXXI. 30.

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THE EDITOR TO THE READER.

IT is a popular reproach uſually caſt upon writers in morality, and perſuaders to devotion, that while they with pompous words repreſent virtue as a ſufficient reward to herſelf, and exhort to the contempt of glory; they prefix their names to their labours, and make the title-page a confutation to the book that follows it.

Our author has effectually averted this objection, having been ſo far from ſeeking a name from others, as not to have left a poſſibility for the diſcovery of his own: but like the river *Nilus*, that gives fertility and bleſſing whereſoever he paſſes, hides his head; and permits himſelf to be only known in the benefits which he diſpenſes.

By what methods the other moſt uſeful works of this excellent author have ſtolen themſelves into the world, I am not enabled to relate, but having been made a party to the publication of this preſent, it may be expected that I render ſome account thereof. For although the curioſity of enquiring into that which is induſtriouſly concealed, be ſuch a rudeneſs, and injuſtice alſo, as by no means deſerves to be encouraged;

yet where a benefit has been received for thoſe who are obliged to deſire to acquaint themſelves with the perſon unto whom they ſtand indebted, that they may pay a reſpect at leaſt, if they can reach at no more equal retribution; this has ſuch a pretence to gratitude, as may juſtly demand to be conſidered. And it will be ſome ſatisfaction to the ingenuous enquirer, that though he have not informed himſelf in the particulars which he deſires, he has not been deficient in the requeſt, and knows as much as is poſſible.

The reader therefore may pleaſe to underſtand, that ſomewhat more than two months ſince I received a letter, accompanied with a roll of papers, opening the which, I found it was written by a hand which I was utterly a ſtranger to, and that had no name ſubſcribed, the purport whereof was as follows:

SIR,

THE general report of your candour perſuades me you will not reject an addreſs though from an unknown hand, which encourages me to the ſending theſe papers to you, with a deſire you would pleaſe to peruſe them, and commit them either to the preſs or the fire as you find them worthy. I ſhall not need to tell you who I am, for if my ſuit be accepted, I have what

what I desire without it: if it be not, it is my interest you should not know who it is that has thus importuned you, your charity, I assure myself, will at a venture pardon,

SIR,

Your humble servant.

It will be superfluous to say how much I was surprized with this so unusual address, how much affected with the singular modesty and humility which it expresst: and after all how much transported upon viewing the treasure, which was thus as from the clouds dropt into my hands. Nor was I long to determine which of the two ways of disposal proposed unto me, was to be made use of: and indeed I should much sooner have performed my trust, and taken care that this excellent Tract had immediately seen the light, had it not been needful to transcribe the whole, before it could safely be committed to the press.

This I mention not only to excuse the delay of the edition, but more especially to beg a pardon for the misadventures of it. It being not easy in a written copy, where a recourse is not to be had to the author, to do him justice, and avoid failures and mistakes: which in the present instance was the more hazardous, in that

that every departure from the author's inimitable pattern, would certainly be for the worſe.

But excuſe and compliment are any where a very inſipid fooliſh thing, and moſt intolerable in a ſerious concern: I ſhall not therefore ſay ought that looks that way, only offer a ſhort requeſt, which I ſuppoſe will be equally in the behalf of the author of this tract, the editor and the readers of it. Which is, that whoever takes this book in hand, would ſeriouſly conſider it, and doing ſo, receive the infinite benefits of uniform virtue, and ſincere piety, the documents whereof are here with all poſſible advantages propoſed: and thereby give the author that greateſt of bleſſings, the being an inſtrument to the eternal happineſs of ſouls; and as to us who deal in the affair of printing, afford ſome ſhare in this moſt deſirable event, abſolving us from the charge of having done miſchief, inſtead of ſervice to the world. For, to ſay the truth, no book is ſo fatally deſtructive as that which convinces of duty, but fails of perſuading to it. But if the beſt books can do harm, it will certainly be difficult to make a plea for the multitudes of a contrary kind, which now eſpecially uſurp upon the age.

ADVER-

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THIS EDITION.

SINCE the first appearance of this work, more than a century has elapsed, and, notwithstanding the many refined publications which have, since that time, been addressed to the fair Sex, with the view of promoting their happiness, the genuine worth of this Tract remains unimpaired. The size of the book will hardly deter any one from reading it—all who read must feel themselves affected by the contents—and those who, having read, are accustomed to reflect, will certainly find themselves recompensed for the time they have dedicated to it.

The present Editor, persuaded that this book may be both acceptable and useful wherever it shall gain admission, is willing to hope, that what has been an agreeable amusement to himself, will give offence to no other person.

D.

Nov. 1, 1786.

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INTRODUCTION.

THOUGH the ſmallneſs of this tract will ſcarce juſtify the ſolemnity of an introduction; yet remembering that it is deſigned for thoſe who are accuſtomed to ceremonious addreſſes, I think it not beſt to approach them too abruptly. And indeed beſides the civility, there ſeems ſome uſe of it in order to my deſign. To adviſe, or reprove, is ſo ungrateful an office, that he that undertakes it, had need uſe all previous arts to vindicate the ſincerity of his purpoſe, and to convince the perſon admoniſhed, that it is neither ſpleen nor prejudice, but the moſt real exuberant kindneſs which prompts him to inflict thoſe *wounds of a friend*, Prov. 27. 6. and that he is never leſs *an enemy, than when he thus tells them the truth*, Gal. 4. 16. Therefore, though they may in the enſuing leaves meet with ſome things which may have a ſhew of ſeverity, yet let me aſſure my reader, they have indeed a deſign of the greateſt ſervice, by correcting the extravagance of ſome, to reſcue the

whole ſex, as from the contagion of the example, ſo from the community of the blame. For ſuch is either the inadvertence or malice of a great part of mankind, that (againſt all rules of diſcourſe) they deduce generals from particulars, make every woman ſo far an *Eve*, that her depravation ſhall forfeit her whole kind; and becauſe there are fooliſh and ſcandalous women, will ſcarce allow there are any other.

The truth is, the error ſeems in many men to be affected; they propoſe to themſelves unworthy ends on women, and make all their obſervations wholly in order to thoſe. He that is upon a baſe purſuit, takes a particular notice of all that he thinks for his turn; the reſt fall not within his ſphere; and it is too probable he is ſo abundantly ſupplied for that abſolute conſideration, that he never deſcends to the comparative. Nay, perhaps there may be yet a deeper original of the ſcandal; the world is much governed by eſtimation; and as applauſe encourages and exalts, ſo an univerſal contempt debaſes and dejects the ſpirit. If it can once paſs into a maxim, that women are ſuch ſilly or vicious creatures, it may put fair for the making them ſo indeed. Themſelves may imbibe the common opinion, charge all their perſonal faults on their ſex, think that they do but their kind, when

when indeed they moſt contradict it, and no more aſpire to any thing worthy, than a man can pretend to the excellencies of an angel. And indeed this ſeems to be the practical inference of ſome women, who could hardly have deſcended to ſuch diſhonours, had they not before been as vile in their own eyes, as they have afterwards rendered themſelves in others.

It may therefore upon this account be a neceſſary charity to the ſex, to acquaint them with their own value, animate them to ſome higher thoughts of themſelves; not to yield their ſuffrage to thoſe injurious eſtimates the world hath made of them, and from a ſuppoſed incapacity of nobler things, to neglect the purſuit of them; from which God and nature have no more precluded the feminine, than the maſculine part of mankind.

In reference to ſecular conſiderations, their advantages are moſt important. Women have a very powerful influence upon all ſorts of tranſactions in the world; the engaging of the *Delilah*, and *plowing with the heifer*, Judg. 14. and 16. being ever the ſureſt way to undermine the counſels, and maſter the force of the ſtouteſt *Samſon*. And accordingly hiſtories of all kinds aſſure us, that the *Gynæceum* has ſtill had a rival ſuffrage with the ſenate. I might urge the more

regular powers which appertain unto that ſex; that all mankind is the pupil and diſciple of female-inſtitution; the daughters till they write women, and the ſons till the firſt ſeven years be paſt, the time when the mind is moſt ductile, and prepared to receive impreſſion, being wholly in the care and conduct of the mother. And whereas it is obſerved by *Ariſtotle* in his politicks, (and is a proof of his being as wiſe, as he was a learned man) that the eſtate of Republics entirely hang on private families, the little monarchies both compoſing and giving law unto the great; it is evident that the diſpoſal of families and all domeſtic concerns therein, lies chiefly on the wife. Whence the ſame *Ariſtotle* declares, that the Spartans, notwithſtanding their ready addreſs to empire, by their great frugality, induſtry, and military virtue, could have but half a happineſs, as failing on the part of their wives. But waving theſe reflections, I ſhall fix only on the perſonal accompliſhments of the ſex, and peculiarly that which is the moſt principal endowment of the rational nature, I mean their underſtanding. Where firſt it will be a little hard to pronounce, that they are naturally inferior to men; when it is conſidered how much of extrinſic weight is put in the balance to turn it on the men's ſide. Men have their parts

cultivated

cultivated and improved by education, refined and ſubtilized by learning and arts, are like an incloſed piece of a common, which, by induſtry and huſbandry, becomes a different thing from the reſt, though the natural turf owned no ſuch inequality. And truly had women the ſame advantages, I dare not ſay, but they would make as good returns of it; ſome of thoſe few that have been tried, have been eminent in ſeveral parts of learning. To omit the modern inſtances; *Theano*, after the death of *Pythagoras*, kept up his ſchool; *Socrates* confeſſes himſelf to have been inſtructed, not only in rhetoric by *Aſpatia*, but even in the higheſt points of philoſophy by *Diotime*. The *Roman* ſtory informs us of the deep wiſdom of *Tanaquil*, *Cornelia*, *Livia*, to paſs by others. And were we ſure they would have ballaſt to their ſails, have humility enough to poiſe them againſt the vanity of learning, I ſee not why they might not more frequently be entruſted with it; for if they could be ſecured againſt this weed, doubtleſs the ſoil is rich enough to bear a good crop. But not to oppoſe a received opinion, let it be admitted, that in reſpect of their intellects they are below men; yet ſure in the ſublimeſt part of humanity, they are their equals; they have ſouls of as divine original, as endleſs a duration, and as capable of

infinite beatitude. That ſpiritual eſſence, that ray of divinity, owns no diſtinction of ſexes; ſo that in this ſenſe alſo, that aphoriſm of the apoſtle holds good, *there is neither male nor female, but all are one*, Gal. 3. 28. And ſure this is the one tranſcendent excellency of human nature. For alas, what value can comparatively be ſet upon all other qualifications, which will finally leave us but like the beaſts that periſh. And this, as it is the higheſt pitch of their worth, ſo it is the ſafeſt ſubject of their contemplations: other knowledge, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 Cor. 8. 1. *may puff up, this only will edify.*

As therefore when we would pride ourſelves we uſe not to boaſt our meaner, but our beſt qualities, ſo let me ſolicit ladies to be ſo juſt to themſelves, as not to take their own meaſures by any thing below this. Why ſhould they take ſo low a level of greatneſs, as to value themſelves upon a title, which is but a bigger blaſt of air, when they may derive their deſcent from above the ſtars, and claim cognation with divinity? Why ſhould they dote on the fictitious image of a perhaps more fictitious beauty, which their glaſs preſents them, when they need but look inward to ſee an infinitely fairer idea, an emanation of the eternal brightneſs? Indeed did they make a juſt eſtimate of themſelves in this

this reſpect, it would overwhelm the vanity of thoſe inferior things wherein they have now ſuch complacency, nor would they ſuffer their nobler part to be affronted by the unequal competition of their meaner.

But there is alſo another conſequence which would flow from that eſteem; they would ſolicitouſly preſerve what they ſo highly prize, it being natural for us to proportion our care to our value. They would be jealouſly vigilant againſt every thing that might eclipſe the radiancy, or contaminate the purity of their ſouls. It was the advice of an heathen moraliſt, *Revere thyſelf*; and it was very wholeſome counſel; for next to our due veneration to God, a reverence to ourſelves is the moſt ſevere controller of all exorbitancies. How can a ſoul that remembers its celeſtial extraction, wallow itſelf in the mire, and ſtoop to any ſordid degenerous practices? It is ſaid of *Themiſtocles*, that ſeeing once a rich booty about the dead corpſes of his enemies, he touched it not, but pointing to another, ſaid, Take thou that, for thou art not *Themiſtocles*. If then a little military fame could ſo elevate his thoughts, it is a ſhame that any who carry an immortal ſpirit about them, ſhould not be raiſed above all the contemptible baits of this ſublunary world. Why

ſhould they not with the like diſdain turn over all ſenſual inordinancies to meer animals, and creatures that have no higher principles than that of ſenſe, whilſt themſelves ſoar up to thoſe more ſublimated *pleaſures, which are at God's right hand for evermore,* Pſal. 16. 12.

We may therefore conclude, that whatever vicious impotence women are under, it is acquired, not natural; nor derived from any illiberality of God, but from the ill management of his bounty. He has placed within them a pillar of cloud and fire, ſufficient to ſhelter and conduct them through all the ſtorms, all the intricacies that can occur in their journey to *Canaan.* If they will forget that more intrinſic part of their being, live as if they were all body, reject the manna, and rave after the quails; that deſtruction which will thereby be induced, they muſt own to ſpring from themſelves. Let them not charge God fooliſhly, or think that by making them women, he neceſſitated them to be proud or wanton, vain or peeviſh; ſince it is manifeſt he made them to better purpoſes, was not partial to the other ſex, but that having, as the prophet ſpeaks, *abundance of ſpirit,* Mal. 2. he equally diſpenſed it, and gave the feebleſt woman as large and capacious a ſoul as that of the greateſt hero.

Nay,

Nay, give me leave to ſay farther, that as to an eternal well being, he ſeems to have placed them in more advantageous circumſtances, than he has done men. He has implanted in them ſome native propenſions, which (as I ſhall hereafter have occaſion to obſerve) do much facilitate the operations of grace upon them. Beſides, there are many temptations to which men are expoſed, that are out of their road. How hard is it for a man to converſe in the world, but he ſhall be importuned to debauchery and exceſs, and muſt forfeit his ſobriety, to maintain the reputation of a ſociable perſon? Again, how liable are they, by a promiſcuous converſation, among variety of humours, to meet with affronts, which the maxims of honour will tell them, muſt (in ſpite of all Chriſt's interdicts) be revenged? And this engages them in quarrels, ſometimes in murders. Now none of theſe are incident to women; they muſt in theſe and ſome other inſtances attack temptations, violently raviſh guilt, and abandon their ſex, the whole œconomy of their eſtate, ere they can diveſt themſelves of their innocency. So that God ſeems in many particulars to have fenced them in more cloſely, and not left them to thoſe wilder excurſions, for which the cuſtomary liberties of the other ſex afford a more open way.

In

In ſhort, they have ſo many advantages towards virtue, that though the philoſopher made it one of his ſolemn acknowledgments to God, that he had made him a man, not a woman, yet I think Chriſtian women have now reaſon enough to invert that form, and to thank God that he made them women, and not men.

But we know advantages which are only in ſpeculation, are looked on with ſome diffidence, till there have been ſome practical experiment made of them. I ſhall therefore evidence the problem by demonſtration and inſtance; deſiring my readers to meaſure the poſſibilities of their arriving to eminent degrees of virtue and piety, by what others have attained to. I ſhall not fetch examples of morality from heathen women, becauſe I am now upon an higher ſtrain; (yet many ſuch might be brought, to the reproach of many women who, pretending to more, fall infinitely ſhort of that: it is Chriſtian virtue that I am now recommending, and which has been eminently exemplified in many of their ſex. How many women do we read of in the goſpel, who in all the duties of aſſiduous attendance on Chriſt, liberalities of love and reſpect, nay, even in zeal and courage, ſurpaſſed even the apoſtles themſelves? We find his croſs ſurrounded, his paſſion celebrated, by

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the avowed tears and lamentations of devout women, when the moſt ſanguine of his diſciples had denied, yea, forſworn, and all had forſaken him. Nay, even death itſelf could not extinguiſh their love: we find the devout *Maries* deſigning a laborious, chargeable, and perhaps hazardous reſpect to his corpſe. And accordingly, it is a memorable atteſtation Chriſt gives to their piety, by making them the firſt witneſſes of his reſurrection, the prime evangeliſts to proclaim thoſe glad tidings; and, as a learned man ſpeaks, Apoſtles to the Apoſtles. Nor is the devotion of that ſex to be found only in the ſacred records: the primitive times have left us many memorials of the like, and the martyrologies are full of female ſufferers of all ages and conditions, who, by the fervour of their zeal, had overcome the timorouſneſs of their nature, and wearied the cruelty of their perſecutors. And as women helped to augment the number of martyrs, ſo did they of confeſſors alſo, in a ſtout owning, and diligent practice of Chriſtianity. Queens and empreſſes knew then no title ſo glorious, as that of a nurſing mother to the church; they have often exchanged their palaces for little cells and oratories, and valued not their own diadems, in compariſon with their Saviour's crown of thorns. And though by a

perpetual

perpetual declination from that priſtine zeal, the inſtances have in every age grown leſs numerous, yet none has wanted ſome very illuſtrious examples. Nay, even in our dregs of time, in this common decay of all good, there are, I doubt not, many who (according to their opportunities) tranſcribe the former copies, live like people that know they muſt live hereafter, and preſent us yet with ſome ſpecimen of ancient virtue. Nay, to ſpeak an impartial truth, it is not be denied, but the reputation of religion is more kept up by women than men, many of this ſex countenancing it by their practice, whereas more of the other do not only neglect, but decry it. And now, ſince women are compaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes, who by doing the thing, give the ſureſt evidence that it is not unfeaſible, why ſhould any plead an impoſſibility? In matter of vanity and pomp they are not ſo eaſily diſheartened, no pattern of that kind can be ſet, which will not be induſtriouſly imitated; nay, in the greateſt inequality of materials for it. Why then ſhould their emulation leave them, where only it could do them good? How comes it, that of thoſe who have equal principles of a ſpiritual being, ſome live according to the dignity of it; and others who ſee them do ſo, do yet live as if they

aſſented

aſſented to that philoſopher's paradox, who ſaid, women had no ſouls; or at leaſt were of the Pythagorean ſect, and looked upon themſelves only as the jails and priſons of former offending ſpirits, which they reſolved to fit for a yet viler tranſmigration; giving them the appetites of beaſts, before they aſſume the bodies? This is indeed an unlucky humility, that thoſe who in all other inſtances are apt to overween, ſhould here ſink ſo much below themſelves. And I hope it will not appear an uncivil addreſs, to perſuade them to a juſter eſtimate of their own worth. And if what has been ſaid to that end, may have any effect, I ſhall not deſire a better preparation to the enſuing tract; ſince ſhe that duly conſiders her own capacity of eternal bliſs, and withal, the poſſibility of as endleſs a miſery, according as ſhe performs or neglects the ſeveral parts of her duty, will ſure need no other incentive to the diligent purſuit of it.

THE

THE LADIES CALLING.

PART I. SECT. I.

OF MODESTY.

1. IT is now many years ſince an addreſs * was made to the gentry of this nation, to perſuade them to that virtue which would be both their pleaſure and reward. I cannot, I confeſs, boaſt any ſuch effect of that, as ſhould much inſpirit the hopes of a new attempt; yet ſince we ſee in our proper ſecular concerns, defeats do many times animate no leſs than ſucceſs, I know not why in this more charitable deſign I ſhould ſit down diſcouraged. Men uſually raiſe not a ſiege upon the firſt repulſe, but reinforce their batteries, obſerve more curiouſly which

* The *Gentleman's Calling.*

are

are the moſt aſſailable acceſſible parts, and accordingly diſpoſe their aſſault: it will then be no unreaſonable imitation in the preſent caſe, if after a ſucceſsleſs attempt upon the more impregnable maſculine part of the gentry, I now aſſay the feminine, whoſe native ſoftneſs and gentleneſs may render them leſs apt for that reſiſtance of good counſel, wherein too many men place their gallantry.

2. I preſume thoſe to whom that little tract was at firſt deſigned, will be ſo willing to relinquiſh their title, that I might without imputation of robbery, exchange my patrons, and by a new dedication ſuperſede the labour of a new book. And indeed, ſince what was there ſaid was founded more on the diſtinction of qualities, than of ſex, there would not need many razures to render it as proper for the one as the other; and I ſhall take ſo much advantage of it, as to aſſure the female gentry, that they may there find much of the duty incumbent on them, in reſpect of that rank and condition they hold in the world: and therefore, though I ſhall ſometimes make ſome reflections on it; yet as to the main, I ſhall think it the eaſieſt courſe, as well for them as myſelf, to direct them thither.

3. But

3. But it may ſeem to have too much of the pedant, to entertain new ſcholars only with the caſt or nauſeated learning of the old; and when I remember I write to ladies, who uſe to think the newneſs of any thing a conſiderable addition to its value; I conceive myſelf obliged as well in civility to their humour, as charity to their needs, to give them ſomething which they may own as their peculiar. And to render it the more unalienable, I ſhall affix it to their ſex; and make it the ſubject of my preſent inquiſition, what in reſpect of that are the proper and diſtinct obligations, under which by the aſſignment of God and nature, they are placed.

4. That the obligation to moral and chriſtian virtues is in itſelf univerſal, and not confined to any ſex or perſon, is not to be denied: yet, as in human conſtitutions there are often precepts, (which though not excluſive of any, do yet) more peculiarly and eminently level at ſome particular rank or order of men; ſo in the laws of God and nature, there appears the like diſtinction. That all-wiſe Creator, who hath put peculiar proprieties and inclinations into his creatures, hath accordingly deſigned their actuating and improving them: and although in mankind, which differs not in ſpecies but in

gender, the variety may ſeem leſs, yet there is ſtill enough to found ſome diverſity, either in the kind or degree of duty. This ſure is ſhadowed to us in that particular caution given to the Jews, not to confound the habit of the ſeveral ſexes, *Deut.* 22. 5. and yet more clearly evinced in the precept which the apoſtles addreſs to women, 1 *Tim.* 2. and 1. *Pet.* 3. Nay, this is ſo granted a truth, that all ages and nations have made ſome diſtinction between maſculine and feminine virtues; nature having not only given a diſtinction as to the beauties of their outward form, but alſo in their very mold and conſtitution, implanted peculiar aptneſſes and proprieties of mind, which accordingly vary the meaſure of decency; that being comely for the one ſex, which often is not (at leaſt in the ſame degree) for the other. It will therefore be no abſurd attempt to decypher thoſe excellencies, which are the genuine and proper ornaments of women: which though in ſome inſtances they may perhaps prove coincident with thoſe of men; yet even thoſe which are equally inclusive of both, by the divine command may have ſome additional weight on the female ſide, in reſpect of decency, fame, or ſome other (not deſpicable) conſideration.

5. For

5. For the better directing our preſent inquiry, it will be moſt regular, firſt to inquire what thoſe virtues are which are univerſally neceſſary to women, in all ages and circumſtances of their lives: ſuch which, like the firſt matter, are pre-required for all former; which, like a firm and ſolid baſis, muſt ſupport all various events, all changes of their condition or relations. And ſecondly, we ſhall conſider them in thoſe changes; track them through the ſeveral ſtages and periods of life, through thoſe ſeveral ſtates which create the moſt conſiderable mutations to them; and in each of thoſe, conſider what are the new and proportionate acceſſions of duty.

6. As in the outward accommodations of life, the things of moſt daily and indiſpenſable uſe, deſerve the greateſt value; ſo in moral or divine endowments, the benefit of poſſeſſing is beſt meaſured by the miſery of wanting them. This firſt rank therefore of female virtues which we are to treat of, will have that to recommend them; they being ſo ſtrictly neceſſary, that their abſence is not only a privative ill, but alſo expoſes to a deluge of all poſitive miſchiefs conſequent to that privation.

7. This will be found true in all the ſeverals we are to paſs through, but in none more eminently than in that we ſhall chooſe to begin

with, the virtue of modeſty, which may be conſidered in a double notion, the one as it is oppoſed to boldneſs and indecency, the other to lightneſs and wantonneſs. In the firſt acception *Zeno* has not ill defined it, to be *the ſcience of decent motion*, it being that which guides and regulates the whole behaviour; checks and controuls all rude exorbitances, and is the great civilizer of converſations. It is, indeed, a virtue of a general influence, does not only ballaſt the mind with ſober and humble thoughts of one's ſelf, but alſo ſteers every part of the outward frame. It appears in the face in calm and meek looks, where it ſo impreſſes itſelf, that it ſeems thence to have acquired the name of ſhamefacedneſs. Certainly (whatever the modern opinion is) there is nothing gives a greater luſtre to a feminine beauty: ſo that St. *Paul* ſeems not ill to have conſulted their concerns in that point, when he ſubſtitutes that as a ſupplettory ornament to *the deckings of gold and pearl, and coſtly array*, 1 *Tim.* 2. But I fear this will be now thought too antiquated a dreſs, and an apoſtle be eſteemed no competent judge in this ſcience; which is now become ſo ſolemn a thing, that certainly no academy in the world can vie in numbers with the ſtudents of this myſtery. Yet when they have ſtrained their art

to

to the higheſt pitch, an innocent modeſty, and native ſimplicity of look, ſhall eclipſe their glaring ſplendor, and triumph over their artificial handſomeneſs. On the other ſide, let a woman be decked with all the embelliſhments of art, nay, and care of nature too, yet if boldneſs be to be read in her face, it blots all the lines of beauty, is like a cloud over the ſun, intercepts the view of all that was otherwiſe amiable, and renders its blackneſs the more obſervable, by being placed near ſomewhat that was apt to attract the eyes.

8. But modeſty confines not itſelf to the face, ſhe is there only in ſhadow and effigy: but is in life and motion in the words, whence ſhe baniſhes all indecency and rudeneſs, all inſolent vauntings, and ſupercilious diſdains, and whatever elſe may render a perſon troubleſome, or ridiculous to the company. Nor does ſhe only refine the language, but ſhe tunes it too, modulates the tone and accent, admits no unhandſome earneſtneſs, or loudneſs of diſcourſe, the latter whereof was thought ſo undecent in *Carneades*, (though in his public lectures) that the Gymnaſiarch reproved him for it. And ſure if it were not allowable in a philoſopher in his ſchool, it will leſs become a woman in ordinary converſe; and if we conſult *Prov.* 7. 11.

and 9. we ſhall find loudneſs and clamour in women, coupled with ſuch other epithets, as will ſurely not much recommend it. A woman's tongue ſhould indeed be like the imaginary muſic of the ſpheres, ſweet and charming; but not to be heard at a diſtance.

9. And as Modeſty preſcribes the manner, ſo it does alſo the meaſure of ſpeaking, reſtrains all exceſſive talkativeneſs, a fault incident to none but the bold; the monopolizing of diſcourſe being one of the greateſt aſſumings imaginable, and ſo rude an impoſing upon the company, that there can ſcarce be a greater indecency in converſation. This is ingeniouſly expreſſed by our divine poet *Herbert*,

A civil gueſt
Will no more talk all, than eat all the feaſt.

He that ingroſſes the talk, inforces ſilence upon the reſt, and ſo is preſumed to look on them only at his auditors and pupils, whilſt he magiſteriouſly dictates to them: which gave occaſion to *Socrates* to ſay, *It is arrogance to ſpeak all, and to be willing to hear nothing.* It is indeed univerſally an inſolent, unbecoming thing, but moſt peculiarly in a woman.

10. The ancient Romans thought it ſo much ſo, that they allowed not that ſex to ſpeak publickly,

lickly, though it were in their own neceſſary defence; inſomuch that when *Ameſia* ſtood before to plead her own cauſe in the ſenate, they looked on it as ſo prodigious a thing, that they ſent to conſult the oracle what it portended to the ſtate. And though theſe firſt ſeverities were ſoon loſt in the ſucceſſes of that empire, *Valerius Maximus* could find but two more, whoſe either neceſſity or impudence, perſuaded them to repeat this unhandſome attempt.

11. And this great indecency of loquacity in women, I am willing to hope is the reaſon why that ſex is ſo generally charged with it; not that they are guilty, but that when they are, it appears ſo unhandſome, as makes it the more eminent and remarkable. Whether it were from the ungracefulneſs of the thing, or from the propenſion women have to it, I ſhall not determine; but we find the Apoſtle very earneſt in his cautions againſt it: 1 *Cor.* 14. 35. He expreſly enjoins women to *keep ſilence in the church*, where he affirms it is a ſhame for them to ſpeak. And though this ſeems only reſtrained to the eccleſiaſtical aſſemblies, yet even ſo it reaches home to the gifted women of our age, who take upon them to be teachers; whereas he allowed them not to ſpeak in the church, no not in order to learning, though a more modeſt deſign than

that of teaching. But beſides this, he has a more indefinite preſcription of ſilence to women, 1 *Tim.* 2. 11. *Let the woman learn in ſilence*; and again v. 12. *to be in ſilence*; the apoſtle ſeems to ground the phraſe, not only on the inferiority of the woman, in regard of the creation and firſt ſin, v. 13, 14. but alſo on the preſumption that they needed inſtruction, towards which ſilence has always been reckoned an indiſpenſable qualification, the introductory precept in all ſchools, as that wherein all attention is founded. If ſome women of our age think they have out-gone that novice-ſtate the apoſtle ſuppoſes, and want no teaching, I muſt crave leave to believe, they want that very firſt principle which ſhould ſet them to learn, *viz.* the knowledge of their own ignorance: a ſcience which ſo grows with ſtudy and conſideration, that *Socrates*, after a long life ſpent in purſuit of wiſdom, gave this as the ſum of his learning, *This only I know, that I know nothing.* This proficiency ſeems much wanting to our female talkers, who, in this, ſeem to confute the common maxim, and give what they have not, by making their ignorance viſible to others, though it be undiſcernible to themſelves: and to ſuch we may not unfitly apply the ſarcaſm of *Zeno* to a talkative

talkative youth; *their ears are fallen into their tongue.*

12. But beſides this aſſuming ſort of talkativeneſs, there is another uſually charged upon the Sex, a mere chatting, prattling humour, which maintains itſelf at the coſt of their neighbours, and can never want ſupplies as long as there is any body within the reach of their obſervation. This I would fain hope is moſt the vice of the vulgar ſort of women; the education of the nobler, ſetting them above thoſe mean entertainments. Yet when it is remembered that St. *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* 5. 13. makes tattling the effect of idleneſs, it may not unreaſonably be feared, that where there is moſt of the cauſe, there will be ſome of the effect. And indeed it would puzzle one to conjecture, how that round of formal viſits among perſons of quality ſhould be kept up without this. That their viſits ſhould be only a dumb ſhew, none will ſuſpect among women; and when the unfaſhionable themes of houſewifery, piety, &c. are excluded, there will not remain many topics of diſcourſe, unleſs this be called into ſupply. And this indeed is a moſt inexhauſtible reſerve, it having ſo many ſprings to feed it, that it is ſcarce poſſible it ſhould fail. And when it is farther conſidered, how apt a miniſter it is to envy,

envy, ſpleen, revenge, and other feminine paſſions, we cannot ſuppoſe it can be unacceptable where any of thoſe bear ſway. But I believe it is not more frequently introduced by any thing, than the vanity of wit, which has no where a more free and exorbitant range, than in cenſuring and deriding; nay, finds not only exerciſe, but triumph too, vain perſons ſeldom conſidering the infirmities or follies of others, without ſome complacencies, and aſſuming reflections on themſelves; which how unagreeable it renders this liberty of talking to that modeſty we recommend, is obvious enough. And would God it were only oppoſite to that; but it is no leſs ſo to all the obligations of juſtice and charity alſo, which are ſcarce ſo frequently violated by any thing, as by this licentiouſneſs of the tongue.

13. There is yet another vice of it, for which the female ſex has been generally accuſed, and that is revealing of ſecrets: an infirmity preſumed ſo incident to them, that *Ariſtotle* is ſaid to have made it one of the three things he ſolemnly repented of, that he had ever truſted a ſecret with a woman. But the greater the prejudice is that they lie under in this reſpect, the greater ought to be their caution, to vindicate not only their perſons, but their ſex, from the imputation,

imputation, which is indeed extremely reproachful: this blabbing humour being a ſymptom of a looſe, impotent ſoul, a kind of incontinence of the mind, that can retain nothing committed to it; but as if that alſo had its diabetic paſſion, perpetually and almoſt inſenſibly evacuating all. And, indeed, however we are willing to appropriate this to the ſex, yet the fault is owing only to this ill conſtitution of the mind, which is oft times no leſs viſible in men; as on the contrary, thoſe women, who by reaſon and virtue, have acquired a ſolidity and firmneſs of mind, are as ſure repoſitories of a ſecret, as the moſt maſculine confident: and ſuch I have no intent to involve in this charge, but rather by propoſing their example to the reſt, ſhew that nature has put them under no fatal neceſſity of being thus impotent. A ſecret is no ſuch unruly thing, but it may be kept in: they may take the wiſe man's word for it, *Eccluſ.* 19. 10. *If thou haſt heard a word, let it die with thee, and be bold, it will not burſt thee.*

14. This is a piece of daring manlineſs, which they may affect without breach of modeſty; would God they would take it in exchange for that virile boldneſs, which is now too common among many, even of the beſt rank. Such a degenerous age do we now live in, that every

every thing ſeems inverted, even ſexes, whilſt men fall to the effeminacy and niceneſs of women, and women take up the confidence, the boldneſs of men; and this too under the notion of good breeding. A bluſh (though formerly reputed the colour of virtue) is accounted worſe manners than thoſe things which ought to occaſion it, and ſuch as nothing but the ſimplicity of a country girl can excuſe. But the infirmity for the moſt part proves very corrigible; a few weeks of the town diſcipline, wears off that piece of ruſticity, and advances them to a modiſh aſſurance. Nor is that deſigned to terminate in itſelf, but it is to carry them on, till they arrive to a perfect metamorphoſis; their geſture, their language, nay, ſometimes their habit too, being affectedly maſculine; ſo that what *Tacitus* ſpeaks of *Vitellius*, in relation to his being a prince, we may apply to them, and ſay, that *if others did not remember them to be women, themſelves could eaſily forget it.*

15. Yet were this affectation confined only to the more innocent indifferent things, it were more tolerable; but alas! it extends farther, and there are women who think they have not made a ſufficient eſcape from their ſex, till they have aſſumed the vices of men too. A

ſober,

ſober, modeſt dialect is too effeminate for them: a bluſtering, ranting ſtyle is taken up, and (to ſhew them proficients in it) adorned with all the oaths and imprecations, their memory or invention can ſupply; as if they meant to vindicate their ſex from the imputation of timorouſneſs, by daring God Almighty. It is true, indeed, an oath ſounds gratingly out of whatever mouth, but out of a woman's, it hath ſuch an uncouth harſhneſs, that there is no noiſe on this ſide hell can be more amazingly odious. Yet this is a muſic that this diſcordant age hath introduced, no former having, I think, ever heard it in places at all civilized. So that the female ſwearers want that poor ſhadow of excuſe the men pretend to, it having been ſo far from cuſtomary, that the unwontedneſs could not but force them to ſome induſtry and pains, ere they could acquire the habit, and ſet up for female *Hectors*; an eſſay, wherein they have been very kind to the maſculine, by ſhewing the world there can be ſomething worſe.

16. It is ſaid there want not ſome who complete the demonſtration, by the other parallel quality of drinking alſo; a vice deteſtable in all, but prodigious in women, who put a double violence upon their nature, the one in the intemperance,

intemperance, the other in the immodeſty. And though they may take their immediate copy from men, yet (to the praiſe of their proficiency) they out-do their exemplar, and draw near the original: nothing human being ſo much beaſt as a drunken woman. This is evident enough if we look only on the mere ſurface of the crime; but if we dive farther into its inferences and adherences, the affirmation is yet more irrefragable. She who is firſt a proſtitute to wine, will ſoon be to luſt alſo: ſhe has diſmiſſed her guards, diſcarded all her ſuggeſtions of reaſon, as well as grace, and is at the mercy of any, or every aſſailant. And when we conſider how much fuller the world is of *Ammons* than *Joſephs*, it will not be hard to gueſs the fate of that woman's chaſtity, which has no other bottom than that of mens. So that unleſs her vice ſecure her virtue, and the loathſomeneſs of the one, prevent attempts on the other, it is ſcarce imaginable a woman that loſes her ſobriety ſhould keep her honeſty. So that, indeed, I might more properly have made this reflection, when I come to ſpeak of modeſty in the ſecond notion of it, as it is oppoſed to lightneſs and wantonneſs, but it falls not much amiſs now, to be the introduction to it.

17. And

17. And if we conſider modeſty in this ſenſe, we ſhall find it the moſt indiſpenſable requiſite of a woman; a thing ſo eſſential and natural to the ſex, that every the leaſt declination from it, is a proportionable receding from womanhood; but the total abandoning it, ranks them among brutes, nay, ſets them as far beneath thoſe, as an acquired vileneſs is below a native. I need make no collection of the verdicts, either of the philoſophers or divines in the caſe, it being ſo much an inſtinct of nature, that though too many make a ſhift to ſuppreſs it in themſelves, yet they cannot ſo darken the notion in others, but that an impudent woman is looked on as a kind of monſter, a thing diverted and diſtorted from its proper form. That there is, indeed, a ſtrange repugnancy to nature, needs no other evidence than the ſtruggling, and difficulty in the firſt violations of modeſty, which always begin with regrets and bluſhes, and require a great deal of ſelf-denial; much of vicious fortitude, to encounter with the recoilings and upbraidings of their own minds.

18. I make no doubt but this age has arrived to as compendious arts of this kind, as induſtrious vice can ſuggeſt, and we have but too many inſtances of early proficients in this learning;

learning; yet I dare appeal even to the forwardeſt of them, whether at firſt they could not with more eaſe have kept their virtue than loſt it. Certainly ſuch are the horrors and ſhames that precede thoſe firſt guilts, that they muſt commit a rape upon themſelves, (force their own reluctancies and averſions) before they can become willing proſtitutes to others. This their ſeducers ſeem well to underſtand, and upon that ſcore are at the pains of ſo many preparatory courtings, ſuch expence of preſents too; as if this were ſo uncouth a crime, that there were no hope to introduce it, but by a confederacy of ſome more familiar vices, their pride or covetouſneſs.

19. The beſt way therefore to countermine thoſe ſtratagems of men, is for women to be ſuſpiciouſly vigilant, even of the firſt approaches. He that means to defend a fort, muſt not abandon the out-works; and ſhe that will ſecure her chaſtity, muſt never let it come to too cloſe a ſiege, but repel the very firſt and moſt remote inſinuations of a tempter. Therefore, when we ſpeak of modeſty, in our preſent notion of it, we are not to oppoſe it only to the groſſer act of incontinency; but to all thoſe miſbehaviours, which either diſcover, or may create any inclination to it; of which ſort is all lightneſs of carriage,

carriage, wanton glances, obſcene diſcourſe; things that ſhew a woman ſo weary of her honour that the next comer may reaſonably expect a ſurrender, and conſequently be invited to the aſſault. Indeed, they are ſuch, that one would rather think them the reſult of many acts, than merely the prologue to one; and that nothing but a cuſtom of private ſin, could ſupply impudence enough to do what is ſo publicly ſcandalous: and where this is found, in thoſe of any conſiderable age, charity itſelf can ſcarce paſs a milder cenſure. Yet poſſibly in thoſe of the youngeſt ſort, they may at firſt be taken up (as their dreſs is) merely in imitation of others, embraced implicitly upon the authority of thoſe whoſe examples govern the modes. When a poor girl, who has ſtill ſo much of a child, as to admire every thing that glitters, ſees theſe things uſed by the gay people of the world, it is no wonder if ſhe take theſe as part of their accompliſhments, and upon peril of that formidable calamity of being unfaſhionable, conform to them. Which yet does not ſo much extenuate the guilt of thoſe few ſeduced perſons, as it aggravates that of the ſeducers, and atteſts the ſtrange corruption of the age, that thoſe things which the leſs hardened ſort of proſtitutes were formerly aſhamed of,

ſhould now paſs into the frequency and avowedneſs of a faſhion, become a part of diſcipline and inſtitution of youth; as if vice now diſdained to have any punies in its ſchool, and therefore, by a prepoſterous anticipation, makes its pupils begin where they were wont to end; initiates them at firſt into their ſhameleſſneſs, which was wont to be the product only of a long habit. What the end will be of theſe piqueerers in impudence, who thus put their virtue on the forlorn hope, is eaſy to divine. Yet is not this the only ſtate of danger: they who keep their ranks, and though they do not provoke aſſaults, yet ſtay to receive them, may be far enough from ſafety. She that lends a patient ear to the praiſes of her wit or beauty, intends at firſt, perhaps, only to gratify her vanity; but when ſhe is once charmed with that Sirens ſong, bewitched with that flattery, ſhe inſenſibly declines to a kindneſs for that perſon that values her ſo much: and when the ſpark ſhall be blown up by perpetual remonſtrances of paſſion, and perhaps little romantic artifices of pretending to die for her, with a thouſand other tricks, which luſt can ſuggeſt, it will, like the *Naptha*, which naturaliſts ſpeak of, in a moment grow to an unquenchable flame, to the ruin both of her virtue and honour.

20. Let

20. Let no woman therefore preſume on the innocence of her firſt intentions; ſhe may as well, upon confidence of a ſound conſtitution, enter a peſt-houſe, and converſe with the plague, whoſe contagion does not more ſubtilely inſinuate itſelf, than this ſort of temptation. And as in that caſe ſhe would not ſtay to define what were the critical diſtance at which ſhe might approach with ſafety, but would run as far from it as ſhe could, ſo in this, it no leſs concerns her, to remove herſelf from the poſſibility of danger, and (how unfaſhionable ſoever it be) to put on ſuch a ſevere modeſty, that her very looks ſhould guard her, and diſcourage the moſt impudent aſſailant. It is ſaid of *Philopœmen*, that the *Lacedemonians* finding it their intereſt to corrupt him with money, they were yet ſo poſſeſſed with the reverence of his virtues, that none durſt undertake to attack him; and ſure it were not impoſſible for women to arrive at the ſame ſecurity; ſuch an authority there is in virtue, that where it is eminent, it is apt to controul all looſe deſires; and he muſt be not only luſtful but ſacrilegious, that attempts to violate ſuch a ſanctuary.

21. But perhaps that ſex may fear, that, by putting on ſuch a ſtrictneſs, they ſhall loſe the glory of their beauty, which is now eſtimated

by the number of thoſe who court and adore them. To this, in the firſt place, I muſt ſay, that they are miſerable trophies to beauty, that muſt be built on the ruins of virtue and honour; and ſhe that to boaſt the length of her hair ſhould hang herſelf in it, would but act the ſame folly in a lower inſtance.

22. But then ſecondly, it is a great miſtake to think their beauty ſhould be leſs prized, ſince it is incident to mens nature to eſteem thoſe things moſt that are at diſtance, whereas an eaſy and cheap deſcent begets contempt. So long as they govern themſelves by the exact rules of prudence and modeſty, their luſtre is like the meridian ſun in its clearneſs, which, though leſs approachable, is counted more glorious; but when they decline from thoſe, they are like that ſun in a cloud, which, though ſafelier gazed on, is not half ſo bright. But, beſides theſe collateral advantages, it is certain that modeſty gives an immediate and direct improvement to beauty; for though men for their own vicious ends wiſh them ſevered, yet they cannot but think, they are moſt amiable when united, and you ſhall hear them often commend the aſpect of that modeſty, which they would fain circumvent.

23. But

23. But in the third place, there is nothing but ſuch a reſervedneſs that can indeed make their beauty triumphant. Parly and conqueſt are the moſt diſtant things; and ſhe that deſcends to treat with an aſſailant, whatever he may tell her of his being her captive, it is but in order to the taking her his; which when ſhe once is, there is no ſtate of ſervitude half ſo wretched, nothing in the world being ſo ſlaviſhly abject as a proſtitute woman. For beſides all the intereſt in another life, which ſhe baſely reſigns, ſhe ſacrifices all that is valuable in this: her reputation ſhe puts wholly in his power that has debauched her, and, which is worſe, her reformation too. If ſhe ſhould have a mind to return to virtue, ſhe dares not, for fear he ſhould divulge her former ſtrayings from it: ſo that, like *Catiline*, ſhe is engaged to future evils to ſecure the paſt. Yea, ſhe ſubjects herſelf, not only to his luſt, but to all his humours and fancies, nay, even to all thoſe who have been inſtrumental to their privacies, none of them all being to be diſpleaſed for fear of blabbing: and when it is remembered, what a ſort of cattle they are, which are the engines in ſuch affairs, there can ſcarce be any thing more deplorable, than to be within their laſh. It is true, indeed, ſome have found a way to cure

this uneaſineſs, by being their own delators, not only confeſſing, but boaſting their crime, and by an impudent owning, prevent all accuſations: yet even this ſerves but to atteſt the intolerableneſs of the former condition, when this worſt of miſchiefs is choſe as a reſcue. Their impatience of being always in awe, makes them take up that reſolution for infamy, which *Cæſar* did for death; who ſaid, it was better to die once than to be always in fear. And though this deſperate remedy may cure the fear, yet it aſcertains the reproach; for, whereas in the impeachment of others there is place for doubt, and charity may prompt ſome to diſbelieve it, yet when the fact is juſtified by the offender, the evidence is uncontrollable, and withal doubles the infamy. For beſides that which adheres to the crime, there is a diſtinct portion due to the impudence; yet like the ſcorpion, it muſt cure its own ſting, and though it increaſes the obloquy, yet it deadens the ſenſe of it.

24. But when they have thus ſteeled their foreheads againſt all impreſſions of ſhame, they are ſtill liable to many other painful effects of their ſin. What fears of being abandoned, what jealouſies of rivals do often torture them? And indeed not without ground: for they cannot but know, that the ſame humours of variety

riety which engaged their paramours in their love, may do the ſame for another, and ſo on; it being as poſſible to graſp the air, as to confine a wandering luſt. Beſides, what anxious apprehenſions have they of the approach of age, which they are ſure will render them loathed and deſpicable, as alſo of all intermedial decays of beauty? How critically do they examine their glaſs? and every wrinkle that repreſents in their face, becomes a deep gaſh in the heart. But if they have at any time the leiſure (or indeed the courage) to look inward, the view is yet more dreadful, a deformed ſoul, ſpoiled of its innocence, and rendered almoſt as brutiſh as the ſin it has conſented to. But though it be in ſome reſpects *like the beaſts that periſh*, it is not, it cannot be in that which would moſt avail it; its endleſs being it cannot loſe, nor can it expect any thing from that pre-eminence of its nature, but an infinity of miſery. This is ſuch an amazing contemplation, as methinks, were it inſiſted on, ſhould allay the hotteſt blood; no impure flames being ſo fierce, as to conteſt with thoſe of unquenchable fire. It is, therefore, though a very impious, yet no unſkilful artifice of thoſe, who would vitiate women in their manners, to corrupt them in their principles, and, by extinguiſhing all hopes and

fears of another world, perſuade them to immerſe boldly into all the abominations of this. It is ſaid, this is now an art of wooing, the modern prelude to the baſeſt propoſals: it ſeems this age dares not truſt only to the former ways of ſeducement, fears there will not be women enough that will forget the intereſts of another world; and therefore is fain to ſet up a new party of others to diſbelieve it. And I fear that deſign has been too proſperous: many women are ſo much more concerned for their bodies than their ſouls, that they are contented the one ſhould be elevated upon the depreſſion of and debaſement of the other; and whilſt with a vain tranſport, they can hear their outward form applauded as angelical, or divine, they can very tamely endure to have their better part vilified and deſpiſed, defined to be only a puff of air in their noſtrils, which will ſcatter with their expiring breath, or in the Atheiſt's phraſe, *Wiſd.* 2. 6. *vaniſh as the ſoft air.* Whereas they ſhould conſider, that they who preach this doctrine to them, deſign it only to infer a pernicious uſe. It is a maxim in politics, that thoſe counſels are ſuſpiciouſly to be ſcanned, which carry in their front the adviſers intereſt; which certainly is never more viſible than in this caſe; he that once gains this point, never needing to con-

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teſt for all the reſt. For he that can perſuade a woman out of her ſoul, will ſoon command her body; and then what was at firſt his intereſt, becomes hers at laſt; and her wiſhes of the mortality of her ſoul, are much ſtronger than it is poſſible her belief of it could be: which confirms abundantly my affirmation of the ſervile, wretched condition of ſuch a perſon. For if we judge *that* a very ſevere ſlavery, which makes people deſirous to reſign a temporal being, what ſhall we think of *that* which provokes them to renounce an eternal?

25. And now by this gradation of miſchief, we may judge of the deplorable ſtate of thoſe who have abandoned their virtue; wherein I doubt not the conſciences of many can not only atteſt, but may improve the deſcription; and all I ſhall ſay to ſuch, is only to conſult that boſom monitor; which, till they do, all homilies will be inſignificant. My deſign was not therefore to tell them what they too well feel, but only to point out their wrecks as warnings to others.

26. Let all thoſe therefore who are yet untainted, and by being ſo, have their judgments clear and unbiaſſed, conſider ſoberly the miſery of the other condition, and that not only to applaud, but ſecure their own; and whenever the outward pomps and gaudy ſplendors of a vitiated

vitiated woman ſeem like that of *Cræſus*, to boaſt their happineſs; let them look through that fallacy, and anſwer with *Solon*, *that thoſe only are happy who are ſo at their end.* Their moſt exquiſite deckings are but like the garlands on a beaſt deſigned for ſacrifice; their richeſt gems are but the chains, not of their ornament, but ſlavery; and their gorgeous apparel, like that of *Herod*, covers perhaps a putrid body, (for even that doth not ſeldom prove their fate) or however, a more putrid ſoul. They who can thus conſider them, will avoid one great ſnare; for it is not always ſo much the luſt of the fleſh, as that of the eyes, which betrays a woman. It is the known infirmity of the ſex, to love gaiety, and a ſplendid appearance, which renders all temptations of that ſort ſo connatural to them, that thoſe who are not arrived to a more ſober eſtimate of things, will ſcarce be ſecure. It will therefore be neceſſary for them to regulate their opinions, and reduce all ſuch things to their juſt value, and then they will appear ſo trifling, that they can never maintain any competition with the more ſolid intereſts of virtue and honour. For though thoſe terms ſeem in this looſe age to be exploded; yet where the things are viſible, they extort a ſecret veneration, even from thoſe who think it their concern

publicly

publicly to deride them: whereas, on the other ſide, a defection from them expoſes to all the contempt imaginable, renders them deſpiſed even by thoſe who betrayed them to it, and leaves a perpetual blot upon their names and their family. For in the character of a woman, let wit and beauty, and all female accompliſhments ſtand in the front; yet if wantonneſs bring up the rear, the ſatire ſoon devours the panegyric, and, as in an echo, the laſt words only will reverberate, and her vice will be remembered when all the reſt will be forgot. But I need not declaim upon this theme; the ſon of *Syrach* has done it to my hand, in many paſſages, but eſpecially *Eccluſ.* 23. to which I refer the reader.

27. What hath been already ſaid, is, I ſuppoſe, ſufficient to convince every woman how much it is her concern to keep herſelf ſtrictly within the bounds of modeſty and virtue. In order to which, there is nothing more important than a judicious choice of their company; I mean not only for men, but women alſo. Vice is contagious, and this eſpecially has that worſt quality of the plague, that it is malicious, and would infect others. A woman that knows herſelf ſcandalous, thinks ſhe is reproached by the virtue of another, looks on her as one that is *made to reprove her ways*, as it is *Wiſd.* 2. 14.

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and therefore in her own defence ſtrives to level the inequality, not by reforming herſelf, (that ſhe thinks too hard a taſk) but by corrupting the other. To this end ſuch as are willing to ſcrew themſelves into an acquaintance, will be officiouſly kind, and by all arts of condeſcenſion and obliging, endeavour to enſnare a woman of reputation into their intimacy. And if they ſucceed, if they can but once entangle her into that cobweb friendſhip, they then, ſpider-like, infuſe their venom, never leave their vile inſinuations, till they have poiſoned and ruined her. But if, on the other ſide, they meet with one of too much ſagacity to be ſo entrapped; if they cannot taint her innocence, they will endeavour to blaſt her fame, repreſent her to the world to be what they would have made her, that is in the Pſalmiſt's phraſe, *ſuch an one as themſelves*, Pſal. 50. 24. ſo that there is no converſing with them, but with a manifeſt peril either of virtue or honour, which ſhould methinks be a ſufficient diſſuaſive. It is true, it is not always in one's power to ſhun the meeting with ſuch perſons, they are too numerous, and too intruding to be totally avoided; unleſs, as St. *Paul* ſays, 1 *Cor.* 5. 10. *one ſhould go out of the world.* But all voluntary converſe ſuppoſes a choice, and therefore every body that will,

will, may refrain that, may keep on the utmoſt frontiers of civility, without ever ſuffering any approach towards intimacy and familiarity.

28. And ſure were this diſtance duly obſerved, it might be of excellent uſe, a kind of lay-excommunication, which might come very ſeaſonably to ſupply the want of the eccleſiaſtic, now out-dated. And this ſeems very well to agree with the ſenſe of *Solon*, the wiſe *Athenian* law-giver, who, beſides that he ſhut the temple-doors againſt them, interdicted them the ſacred aſſemblies; made it one of his laws, that an adultreſs ſhould not be permitted to wear any ornaments, that ſo they might in their dreſs carry the note of their infamy. Should we have the like diſtinction obſerved, I fear many of our gayeſt birds would be unplumed: and though the ſame be not now an expedient practicable, yet the former is, and might be of very good uſe. For, beſides that already mentioned, of ſecuring the innocent, it might perhaps have a good effect on the guilty, who could not but reflect with ſome ſhame on themſelves, if they were thus ſingled out and diſcriminated; whereas whilſt they are ſuffered to mix with the beſt ſocieties, (like hurt deer in an herd) they flatter themſelves they are undiſcernable.

29. But indeed the advantage of this courſe

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is yet more extenſive, and would reach the whole ſex, which now ſeems to lie under a general ſcandal, for the fault of particular perſons. We know any conſiderable number of ſmutty ears, caſts a blackneſs on the whole field, which yet, were they apart, would perhaps not fill a ſmall corner of it: and in this uncharitable age, things are apt to be denominated not from the greater, but worſer part: whereas, were the precious ſevered from the vile, by ſome note of diſtinction, there might then a more certain eſtimate be made: and I cannot be ſo ſevere to woman-kind, as not to believe the ſcandalous part would then make but a ſmall ſhew, which now makes ſo great a noiſe.

30. Beſides this, I can ſuggeſt but one way more for women of honour to vindicate their ſex, and that is by making their own virtue as illuſtrious as they can; and by the bright ſhine of that, draw off mens eyes from the worſer proſpect. And to this there is required, not only innocency, but prudence; to abſtain, as from all real evil, *ſo from the appearance of it too*, 1 Theſſ. 5. 22. Not by any doubtful or ſuſpicious action, to give any umbrage for cenſure; but, as the apoſtle ſays in another caſe, 2 *Cor.* 11. 11. *To cut off occaſion from them that deſire occaſion*; to deny themſelves the moſt innocent

nocent liberties, when any ſcandalous inference is like to be deduced from them. And though perhaps no caution is enough to ſecure them againſt the malicious and the jealous, though it is poſſible ſome black mouth may aſperſe them, yet they have ſtill *Plato*'s reſerve, who being told of ſome who had defamed him, *It is no matter* ſaid he, *I muſt live ſo that none ſhall believe them.* If their lives be ſuch, that they may acquit themſelves to the ſober and unprejudiced, they have all the ſecurity that can be aſpired to in this world; the more evincing atteſtation they muſt attend from the unerring tribunal hereafter; where there lies a certain appeal for all injured perſons who can calmly wait for it.

SECT.

SECT. II.

OF MEEKNESS.

1. IN the next place we may rank Meekneſs as a neceſſary feminine virtue; this even nature ſeems to teach, which abhors monſtroſities and diſproportions, and therefore having allotted to women a more ſmooth and ſoft compoſition of body, infers thereby her intention, that the mind ſhould correſpond with it. For though the adulterations of art, can repreſent in the ſame face beauty in one poſition, and deformity in another, yet nature is more ſincere, and never meant a ſerene and clear forehead, ſhould be the frontiſpiece to a cloudy tempeſtuous heart. It is therefore to be wiſhed they would take the admonition, and whilſt they conſult their glaſſes, whether to applaud or improve their outward form, they would caſt one look inwards, and examine what ſymmetry there is held with a fair out-ſide, whether any ſtorm of paſſion darken and overcaſt their interior beauty, and uſe at leaſt an equal diligence to reſcue that, as they would to clear their face from any ſtain or blemiſh.

2. But it is not nature only which ſuggeſts this, but the God of nature too, meekneſs being

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ing not only recommended to all as a chriſtian virtue; but particularly enjoined to women as a peculiar accompliſhment of their ſex, 1 *Pet.* 3. 4. where after the mention of all the exquiſite and coſtly deckings of art, this one *ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit*, is confronted to them, with this eminent atteſtation, that it is *in the ſight of God of great price*; and therefore to all who will not enter diſpute with God, and conteſt his judgment, it muſt be ſo too. Now, though meekneſs be in itſelf a ſingle entire virtue, yet it is diverſified, according to the ſeveral faculties of the ſoul, over which it has influence; ſo that there is a meekneſs of the underſtanding, a meekneſs of the will, and a meekneſs of the affections: all which muſt concur to make up the meek and quiet ſpirit.

3. And firſt of the meekneſs of the underſtanding; it conſiſts in a pliableneſs to conviction, and is directly oppoſite to that ſullen adherence obſervable in too many; who judge of tenets, not by their conformity to truth and reaſon, but to their prepoſſeſſions, and tenaciouſly retained opinions; only becauſe they (or ſome in whom they confide) have once owned them; and certainly ſuch a temper is of all others the moſt deſtructive to wiſdom. This puts them upon the chance of a lottery, and

what they firſt happen to draw, determines them merely upon the privilege of its precedency: ſo that had *Mahomet* firſt ſeized them, his tenure would have been as indefeaſible as Chriſt's now. How great the force of ſuch prejudices are, we may ſee by the oppoſitions it raiſed againſt chriſtian doctrine in groſs at its firſt promulgation; the Jews blind zeal for the traditions of the fathers, engaging them in the murder even of that very Meſſias, whom thoſe traditions had taught them to expect, and after in the perſecution of that doctrine, which his reſurrection had ſo irrefragably atteſted. And to juſtify the propriety of this obſervation to thoſe I now write to, it is expreſsly affirmed, *Acts* 13. 50. that they made uſe of the zeal of the female proſelytes for that purpoſe. *The* Jews *ſtirred up the devout and honourable women, and raiſed a perſecution againſt* Paul *and* Barnabas. So that it is no unreaſonable advice of ſuch, to be ſure they ſee well their way before they run too fierce a career in it, otherwiſe the greateſt heat without light, does but reſemble that of the bottomleſs pit, where flames and darkneſs do at once cohabit.

4. But whilſt I decry this prejudicate ſtiffneſs, I intend not to plead for its contrary extreme, and recommend a too eaſy flexibility, which

which is a temper of equal, if not more ill conſequence than the former. The adhering to one opinion, can expoſe but to one error; but a mind that lies open to the effluxes of all new tenets, may ſucceſſively entertain a whole ocean of deluſions; and to be thus yielding, is not a meekneſs, but ſervileneſs of underſtanding. Indeed, it is ſo great a weakneſs of mind, that the Apoſtle ſinks it ſomewhat below the impotence of women, and reſembles it to that of children, *Epheſ.* 4. 14. Yet it ſeems the folly of ſome women had levelled them with children in this matter: for the ſame Apoſtle takes notice of ſuch, to whom as he gives the epithet of *ſilly*, ſo the latter part of the character ſpeaks them incorrigibly ſo, *ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*, 1 Tim. 3. 6. a deſcription which, if we compare with our times, we muſt think prophetic. For how many inſtances hath this age given us of women ſo led captive; who being either affected with the novelty, or ſeduced by the pretended zeal of a new teacher, have given up their underſtandings to him: and for a while, this ſtrong man has kept poſſeſſion; but when a ſtronger than he hath come, it has fared as with him in the Goſpel, a louder zeal or a newer doctrine, ſoon divides his ſpoils; and that by force of

the very ſame principle on which he ſet up; which within a while undermines the latter alſo, and ſo ſucceſſively, till the poor proſelyte has been hurried through all the mazes of wild error, and at laſt, perhaps, (like a palate diſtracted by too much variety) ſhe fixes upon that which at firſt ſhe moſt decried. This has been eventually true in ſome, who ſetting out in the fierceſt deteſtation of popery, have wandered ſo long, like the blinded *Syrians*, 2 *Kings* 6. 20. that they have at laſt found themſelves in the midſt of *Samaria*; by an inſenſible circular motion, been brought about to that religion, from which alone they deſigned to fly. So little do itching ears know whither they may be carried. And indeed the ear, when infected with that prurient humour, may vie miſchiefs with the tongue, which St. *James* tells us, *Chap.* 3. 25. *is* (though a little member) *a world of iniquity*.

5. It is therefore the moſt important concern of all, to fortify that ſo aſſailable a part; but it is eſpecially ſo of women, not only in reſpect of that natural imbecillity, which renders them liable to ſeducement; but alſo becauſe the opinion of their being ſo, makes them particularly aimed at by ſeducers. For as he, who is to put off adulterated wares, will

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chooſe the moſt unwary chapman; ſo theſe ſophiſticators of divinity, deſire the moſt undiſcerning auditors. And truly that ſo many of that ſex are ſo, I do not ſo much impute to any natural defect, as to the looſe notions they have of religion, of which they have, perhaps, ſome general confuſed apprehenſions; but have ſo little penetrated the depth of it, that they know not why they are *Chriſtians* rather than *Turks*, why of the church of *England* rather than that of *Rome* or *Geneva*. And while they are thus unfixed, and have no better principle than cuſtom and compliance; they have nothing to anſwer to any the groſſeſt deceit, that can be obtruded upon them, which, for ought they know or have conſidered, may be as true as any thing they formerly profeſt. Now, when any one in this condition ſhall be aſſaulted, not only by the repeated importunities of falſe teachers; but alſo by ingeminated threatenings of hell and damnation; ſhe is like one awaked by the outcry of fire, and in that amaze will be apt to run wherever the firſt diſcoverer of her danger ſhall lead her.

6. I ſhall therefore moſt earneſtly recommend it as the beſt antidote againſt the poiſon of novel doctrines, to examine well the grounds of the old. For want of this it is, that

our church has been expoſed to ſo many frivolous cavils, it being too incident to the perverſe pride of human nature, to ſpeak evil of things we underſtand not. And had our ſhezealots firſt conſulted ſome ſober guides, and from them underſtood upon what grounds the practice as well as doctrine of our church was founded, they could not ſo eaſily have been carried away *by every wind of doctrine*, as the Apoſtle phraſes it, *Eph.* 4. 14.

7. Indeed this is no more than common juſtice exacts, which forbids the condemning even the vileſt malefactor unheard: (and unheard and not underſtood, are in this caſe terms equivalent) yet ſure they owe ſomething more to that church, from whoſe miniſtry themſelves muſt confeſs to have derived their chriſtianity, in whoſe boſom they have been cheriſhed, and which conſequently may plead a mother's right in them. So that unleſs poſſeſſion, which fortifies civil rights, deſtroys the eccleſiaſtic; ſhe may challenge beſides that natural juſtice (which is the common due of humanity) a parental reſpect and reverence, a debt which is ſure very ill anſwered by thoſe who caſt off her obedience before they have at all conſidered, what it is ſhe commands. And if the abdicating a child be a thing ſo unnatural, as needs ſome very

very important cauſe to juſtify it; the renouncing of a parent muſt require a reaſon as far tranſcending that, as the guilt does, if it be cauſeleſs: and ſuch it muſt inevitably be in all, who, for want of due examination, ſuffer themſelves to be led into groundleſs prejudices and diſguſts.

8. To prevent that guilt, and a multitude of others which ſpring from it, I muſt again repeat my propoſal, that women of quality (who are preſumed to want neither parts nor leiſure for it) would a little look into the inſide of the religion they profeſs: if it be a true one, it will bear the inſpection, truth never ſhunning the light; if it be not, the diſcovery cannot be too early. And indeed, among the many remarkable impreſſes of truth our church bears, this is one, that ſhe does not blindfold her proſelytes, but leaves them the uſe of their diſcerning faculty, and does not, by obtruding upon them an implicit belief, force them to lay down their reaſon when they take up their faith. And now, why ſhould not ladies ſpend a few of their many idle hours in this enquiry, I mean, not to embark themſelves in a maze of controverſies; but only to diſcern thoſe plain grounds of truth on which our church builds; which, if well digeſted, will prove a better amulet againſt

deluſion, than the reading whole *Tomes* of diſputations, more apt to diſtract than fortify their underſtandings? And had they thus done, had their minds been ballaſted by ſober principles, ſo many of them had never made up the triumphs of ſo many and ſo various ſeducers. And though to ſuch, this advertiſement may come too late, (like aſſiſtance after a defeat) yet it may be a ſeaſonable caution to others: and to thoſe I offer it, as that very temper wherein conſiſts that rational meekneſs of the underſtanding I would recommend to them, which is equally violated by a blind obſtinacy, or as blind a flexibility.

9. A ſecond ſort of meekneſs is that of the will, which lies in its juſt ſubordination, and ſubmiſſion to a more ſupreme authority, which in divine things is the will of God; in natural or moral, right reaſon, and in human conſtitutions, the commands of ſuperiors. And ſo long as the will governs itſelf by theſe in their reſpective orders, it tranſgreſſes not the meekneſs required of it. But experience atteſts, that the will is now in its depravation an imperious faculty, apt to caſt off that ſubjection to which it was deſigned, and act independently from thoſe motives which ſhould influence it. This, God knows, is too common

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in all ages, all conditions, and ſexes: but the feminine lies more eſpecially under an ill name for it. Whether that have grown from the low opinion conceived of their reaſon, leſs able to maintain its empire, or from the multiplied habitual inſtances themſelves have given of unruly wills, I ſhall not undertake to determine; but either way, it is, I am ſure, ſo great a reproach as they ſhould be very induſtrious to wipe it off. And truly I know nothing more incentive to that endeavour, than the having a right eſtimate of the happineſs, as well as virtue of a governable will. How calmly do thoſe glide through all (even the rougheſt) events, that can but maſter that ſtubborn faculty? A will reſigned to God's, how does it enervate and enfeeble any calamity? Nay, indeed, it triumphs over it, and by that conjunction with him that ordains it, may be ſaid to command even what it ſuffers. It was a philoſophical maxim, that a wiſe moral man could not be injured, could not be miſerable; but ſure it is much more true of him, who has that divine wiſdom of chriſtian reſignation, that twiſts and inwraps all his choices with God's, and is neither at the pains nor hazards of his own elections; but is ſecure, that unleſs omniſcience

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can be deceived, or omnipotence defeated, he ſhall have what is really beſt for him.

10. Proportionable (though not equal) to this, is the happineſs of a will regulated by reaſon in things within its ſphere: it is the dignity of human nature, and that which diſtinguiſhes it from that of beaſts. Yea, even thoſe grow more contemptible in their kinds, the farther they are removed from it. The ſtupid ſturdineſs of an aſs, has rendered it proverbial for folly, when the tractableneſs of other animals, has tempted ſome to liſt them among rationals. Beſides, reaſon affords ſomething of a baſis and foundation for the will to bottom on. He that governs himſelf by reaſon, (that being ſtill the ſame) will act equally and conſonant to himſelf; but he that does a thing this moment, only becauſe he will, may the next have as weighty an argument to do ſomething quite contrary; and ſo may ſpend his whole time in unravelling his *ſpiders webs*, as the prophet rightly calls the vain deſigns of ſuch brutiſh men, *Iſai.* 59. 5. Not to ſpeak of the recoilings and upbraidings of the rational faculties, which are the uneaſy attendants of thoſe who reſiſt its more direct admonitions; there is nothing expoſes to more ſecular ruins. An ungovernable will,

will, is the moſt precipitous thing imaginable, and, like the devil in the ſwine, hurries headlong to deſtruction; and yet deprives one of that poor reſerve, that faint comfort of the miſerable, pity; which will not be ſo much invited by the miſery, as averted by that wilfulneſs which cauſed it. Nay, indeed, ſo little can ſuch perſons expect the compaſſion of others, that it will be hard for them to afford themſelves their own; the conſciouſneſs that their calamities are but the iſſues of their own perverſeneſs, being apt to diſpoſe them, more to hate than pity. And this is no ſmall accumulation of wretchedneſs, when a man ſuffers, not only directly, but at the rebound too; re-inflicts his miſeries upon himſelf, by a grating reflection on his own madneſs. Yea, ſo great an aggravation is it, that even hell itſelf is enhanced and completed by it; all the torments there being edged and ſharpened, by the woful remembrance, that they might once have been avoided.

11. In the laſt place, a will duly ſubmiſſive to lawful ſuperiors, is not only an amiable thing in the eyes of others, but exceedingly happy to ones ſelf; it is the parent of peace and order, both public and private; a bleſſing ſo conſiderable, as is very cheaply bought with a little receding

receding from ones own will or humour: whereas the contrary temper is the ſpring and original of infinite confuſions, the grand incendiary which ſets kingdoms, churches, families, in combuſtion; a flat contradiction, not only to the word, but even the works of God; a kind of anti-creative power, which reduces things to that chaos from whence God drew them. Our age has given us too many and too pregnant inſtances of its miſchievous effects, which may ſerve to enhance the value of that governable, malleable temper, I now recommend. And as a will thus reſigned to reaſon and juſt authority, is a felicity, all rational natures ſhould aſpire to; ſo eſpecially the feminine ſex, whoſe paſſions being naturally the more impetuous, ought to be the more ſtrictly guarded, and kept under the ſevere diſcipline of reaſon: for where it is otherwiſe, where a woman has no guide but her will, and her will is nothing but her humour; the event is ſure to be fatal to herſelf, and often to others alſo.

12. And the hazard of this renders that other reſtraint of the will, I mean that of obedience to ſuperiors, a very happy impoſition; though perhaps it is not always thought ſo: for thoſe who reſiſt the government of reaſon, are not very apt to ſubmit to that of authority.

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Yet, ſure, God and nature do atteſt the particular expediency of this to women, by having placed that ſex in a degree of inferiority to the other. Nay, farther it is obſervable, that as there are but three ſtates of life, through which they can regularly paſs, *viz.* virginity, marriage, and widowhood; two of them are ſtates of ſubjection, the firſt to the parent, the ſecond to the huſband, and the third, as it is caſual, whether ever they arrive to it or no, ſo if they do, we find it by God himſelf reckoned as a condition the moſt deſolate and deplorable. If I ſhould ſay this happens upon that very ſcore, that they are left to their own guidance, the ſad wrecks of many would too much juſtify the gloſs: but, however, it evinces, that God ſets not the ſame value upon their being maſterleſs, which ſome of them do, whilſt he reckons them moſt miſerable, when they are moſt at liberty.

13. And ſince God's aſſignation has thus determined ſubjection to be the womens lot, there needs no other argument of its fitneſs, or for their acquieſcence. Therefore, whenever they oppoſe it, the contumacy flies higher than the immediate ſuperior, and reaches God himſelf. And I am apt to think there would not many of that timorous ſex dare ſo far, were it not for ſome falſe punctilios of honour, which (like thoſe

thoſe among our duellists) they have impoſed on themſelves. Theſe repreſent meekneſs and ſubmiſſion as a ſilly ſheepiſh quality, unfit for women of breeding and ſpirit: whilſt an imperious obſtinacy paſſes for nobleneſs and greatneſs of mind. But alas! they are wofully miſtaken in their notion of a great ſpirit, which conſiſts in ſcorning to do unworthy and vile things, and courageouſly encountering the adverſe events of life, not in ſpurning a duty, or ſeeking to pull themſelves from that ſphere where the divine wiſdom hath placed them. No ſure, ſtubbornneſs is the mark only of a great ſtomach, not of a great mind; and the cruelty of a coward, may as well denominate him valiant, as the ungovernableneſs of a woman can ſpeak her generous.

14. In this, I preſume, I ſpeak the common ſenſe of all: for what value ſoever they put upon themſelves, nothing renders them leſs acceptable to others; an imperious woman being a plague to her relatives, and a deriſion to ſtrangers, yea, and a torment to herſelf: every the leaſt contradiction (which a meek perſon would paſs over inſenſibly) inflaming ſuch an unruly temper, and tranſporting her to ſuch extravagances, as often produce very miſchievous effects. On the other ſide, if ſhe be humoured

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and complied with, that ſerves only to make her more inſolent and intolerable; makes her humours grow to ſuch an height, that ſhe knows not herſelf what would pleaſe her, and yet expects that others ſhould: ſo that to ſuch a one, we may apply what *Hannibal* ſaid of *Marcellus*, that if he were vanquiſhed, he never gave reſt to himſelf, nor if he were victorious, to others. Certainly the uneaſineſs of a perverſe ſpirit, is ſo great, that could ſuch come but to compare it with the calm and happy ſerenity of meekneſs and obedience, there would need no other lecture to commend them to their eſteem or practice.

15. The laſt branch of meekneſs is that of the affections, and conſiſts in reducing the paſſions to a temper and calmneſs, not ſuffering them to make uproars within to diſturb ones ſelf, nor without, to the diſquieting of others; and to this regulation, meekneſs is generally ſubſervient. Yet, becauſe the correcting of ſome particular paſſions are more immediately aſſignable to other virtues, I ſhall only inſiſt upon that, on which this has a more direct and peculiar influence, I mean anger, a two-edged paſſion, which, whilſt it deals its blows without, wounds yet more fatally within. The commotion and vexation which an angry man feels,

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is far more painful, than any thing he can ordinarily inflict upon another: herein juſtifying the epithet uſually given to anger, that it is a ſhort madneſs; for who that were in his right wits, would incur a greater miſchief to do a leſs? It is indeed ſo great a diſtemper of the mind, that he that is poſſeſſed with it, is incompetent for any ſober undertaking, and ſhould as much be ſuſpended from acting, as one in a phrenſy or lunacy. This was the judgment and practice too of *Plato*, who going to chaſtiſe a ſervant, and finding himſelf grow angry, ſtopt his correction; a friend coming in, and aſking what he was doing, *puniſhing*, replies he, *an angry man*, as thinking himſelf unfit to diſcipline another, till he had ſubdued his own paſſion. Another time his ſlave having offended him, *I would beat thee*, ſays he, *but that I am angry*. It were endleſs indeed to recite the black epithets given by all moraliſts to this vice. It ſhall ſuffice to take the ſuffrage of the wiſeſt of men, one that had acquainted himſelf to *know madneſs and folly*, Eccl. 1. 17. and we find it his ſentence, that *anger reſts in the boſom of fools*, Eccl. 7. 9.

16. And what is thus univerſally unbecoming to human nature, cannot ſure be leſs indecent for the gentler ſex: it is rather more ſo, every thing

thing contracting ſo much more of deformity, by how much it recedes from its proper kind. Now nature hath befriended women with a more cool and temperate conſtitution, put leſs of fire, and conſequently of choler, in their compoſitions; ſo that their heats of that kind are adventitious and preternatural, raiſed often by fancy or pride, and ſo both look more unhandſomely, and have leſs of pretence to veil and cover them. Beſides, women have a native feebleneſs, unable to back and aſſert their angers with any effective force, which may admoniſh them, it was never intended they ſhould let looſe to that paſſion, which nature ſeems by that very inability to have interdicted them. But when they do it, they render themſelves at once deſpiſed and abhorred; nothing being more ridiculouſly hateful, than an impotent rage.

17. But as the moſt feeble inſect may ſometimes diſturb, though not much hurt us, ſo there is one feminine weapon, which as it is always ready, ſo proves often troubleſome, I mean the tongue, which, though in its loudeſt clamours, can naturally invade nothing but the ear; yet even that is a moleſtation. The barking of a dog, though we are ſecure he cannot bite, is a grating, unpleaſant ſound; and while women

ſeek that way to vent their rage, they are but a ſort of ſpeaking brutes, and ſhould conſider whether that do not reflect more contempt upon themſelves, than their moſt virulent reproaches can fix upon others.

18. But ſome things have had the luck to acquire a formidableneſs no body knows how; and ſure there is no greater inſtance of it than in this caſe. A clamorous woman is looked on, though not with reverence, yet with much dread; and we often find things done to prevent or appeaſe her ſtorms, which would be denied to the calm and rational deſires of a meeker perſon. And perhaps ſuch ſucceſſes have not been a little acceſſary to the fomenting the humour: yet ſure it gives them little cauſe of triumph, when they conſider how odious it makes them, how unfit (yea intolerable) for human ſociety. Let them take the verdict of *Solomon*, who declares *it better to dwell in a corner of a houſe top, than with a brawling woman in a wide houſe*, Prov. 25. 24. Nor does the ſon of *Sirach* ſpeak leſs ſharply, though more ironically, *Eccluſ.* 26. 27. *A loud crying woman and a ſcold, ſhall be ſought out to drive away the enemy.* And though he taxes the feminine vices impartially enough, yet there is ſcarce any of them which he more often and more ſeverely

ſeverely brands, than this of unquietneſs. It ſeems it was a thing generally looked on as very inſufferable; as appears by *Socrates*, who when he deſigned to diſcipline himſelf to perfect patience and tolerance, knew no better way of exerciſe, than to get a ſhrew to his wife; an excellence that may perhaps again recommend a woman, when we fall into an age of philoſophers; but at preſent, it will be hard for any of our *Xantippes* to find a *Socrates*; and therefore that quality is as deſtructive to their intereſts in getting huſbands, as it is to the huſband's quiet when he is got. But I preſume I need not declaim further againſt this fault, which I ſuppoſe cannot be frequent among that rank of women, for whom this tract is intended: for if neither moral nor divine conſiderations have prevented it, yet probably civility and a genteel education hath: a ſcold being a creature to be looked for only in ſtalls and markets, not among perſons of quality. Yet if there be any that have deſcended to ſo ſordid a practice, they have ſo far degraded themſelves, that they are not to wonder if others ſubtract that reſpect, which upon other accounts they might demand.

19. And to ſuch I ſhould recommend the uſual method of phyſic, which is to cure by revulſion: let that ſharp humour which ſo ha-

bitually flows to the tongue, be taught a little to recoil, and work inward; and inſtead of reviling others, diſcipline and correct themſelves: let them upbraid their own madneſs, that to gratify an impotent, nay, a moſt painful paſſion, they have degenerated from what their nature, their qualities, their education deſigned them. And if they can thus reverſe their diſpleaſures, it will not only ſecure others from all their indecent aſſaults, but it will at laſt extinguiſh them. For anger is corroſive, and if it be kept only to feed upon its ſelf, muſt be its own devourer; if it be permitted to fetch no forage from without, nor to nouriſh itſelf with ſuſpicions and ſurmiſes of others, nor to make any ſallies at the tongue, it cannot long hold out.

20. And how much they will herein conſult their intereſt and their reputation too, they may be taught by *Solomon*, who makes it the diſtinctive *ſign of a fooliſh woman, to be clamorous*, Prov. 9. 13. whereas when he gives the character of his excellent woman, he links wiſdom and gentleneſs together: *She openeth her mouth with wiſdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindneſs*, Prov. 31. 26. If this verdict may be admitted, (as ſure it ought, whether we conſider his wiſdom, or dear bought experience

rience in women) it will confute the common plea of querulous ſpirits, who think that to ſeem inſenſible of any the leaſt provocation is to appear ſilly and ſtupid; though truly if it were ſo, it would be full as eligible as to appear mad and raving, as they commonly do in the tranſport of their fury.

21. To conclude, meekneſs is ſo amiable, ſo indearing a quality, and ſo peculiarly embelliſhing to women, that did they but at all conſider it, with half the attention they do their more trivial exterior ornaments, it would certainly be taken up as the univerſal mode in all the ſeveral variations of it, this ſection has preſented.

SECT. III.

OF COMPASSION.

1. OF near affinity to the virtue of meekneſs, is that of mercy and compaſſion, which indeed can ſcarce thrive in any place where the former hath not prepared the ſoil; anger and obſtinacy being like that rough eaſt wind which brought the *Egyptian* locuſts, *Exod.* 10. 13. to eat up every green thing in the land. A mind haraſſed with its own impatience, is not at leiſure to obſerve, much leſs to condole the calamities of others. But as a calm and clear day befriends us with a more diſtinct proſpect of diſtant objects, ſo when all is quiet and ſerene within us, we can then look about us, and diſcern what exigencies of others invite our pities.

2. I need not ſay much to raiſe an eſtimate of this virtue, ſince it is ſo eſſential to our nature, ſo interwoven in the compoſition of humanity, that we find in ſcripture phraſe, compaſſion is generally ſeated in the moſt inward ſenſible part of our frame and bowels. So *Col.* 3. 12. *Put on therefore bowels of mercy*; and *Phil.* 2. 1. *Bowels and mercies.* So that a cruel ruthleſs perſon

perſon unmans himſelf, and is by the common vote of mankind to be liſted among brutes; nay, not among the better, but only the more hateful, noxious ſort of them.

3. But yet this is more unnatural in the female ſex, which, being of ſofter mold, is more pliant and yielding to the impreſſions of pity, and, by the ſtrength of fancy, redoubles the horror of any ſad object. Yea, ſo remarkable is this tenderneſs, that God, when he would moſt magnify his own compaſſion, illuſtrates it by that of women, as the higheſt human inſtance. Indeed, ſuch a propenſion have women to commiſeration, that they are uſually taxed with an exceſs in it; ſo that any imprudent lenity is proverbially called, a womaniſh pity: and therefore it may be thought an impertinence to exhort them to that which they can ſcarce avoid. But to this I anſwer, firſt, that in this degenerous age, it is no news to ſee people violate their inſtincts, as well as their duties, and be worſe than their nature inclines them, many ſins being committed even againſt the grain, and with violence to conſtitution.

4. Yet, ſecondly, it is not a mere melting of the eyes, or yearning of the bowels, I deſign to recommend: alas, their tears will not be drink to a thirſty ſoul, nor will ſhivering at his

nakedneſs clothe him. This is ſuch an inſignificant mercy as St. *James* deſcribes, ſaying to a brother or ſiſter, *be ye warmed, be ye filled, but not giving them things needful to the body*, chap. 2. 16. Indeed, ſhe that weeps over thoſe diſtreſſes ſhe will not relieve, might have been fit to be entered in the liſt of the mourning women among the jews and heathens, who were hired to make up the tragic pomp of funerals with their mercenary ſorrow; but had no real concern in that loſs they ſeemed to bewail. It is therefore a more active ſort of compaſſion, to which I would invite them; and yet for method ſake, I ſhall conſider it under two diſtinct heads; Giving and Forgiving.

5. By Giving, in this place, I mean not a general liberality, (though that prudently bounded, is an excellence well becoming perſons of fortune) but only ſuch a Giving as terminates upon the needy, and is applied to ſuccour their indigencies. To give to thoſe from whom they may expect returns, may be a deſign; but at the beſt can be but generoſity and frankneſs of humour. It is only then mercy (as Chriſt himſelf has defined it) when it is to thoſe from whom they can *hope for nothing again*.

6. And in this virtue women have in former ages eminently excelled: yea, ſo eſſential

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was it, that we find *Solomon* thought not their character complete without it; but numbers it among the properties of his virtuous woman, *Prov.* 31, 29. *She ſtretcheth forth her hand to the poor; and reacheth forth her hand to the needy.* And it is a little obſervable, that after he has deſcribed her induſtry and diligence for the acquiring of wealth, this is ſet in the front of her diſburſements, as the principal uſe ſhe made of it; and precedes her providing ſcarlet for her houſehold, or fine linen and purple for herſelf, v. 11, *&c.* 22. The application is very obvious, and admoniſhes all that own the ſame title of virtuous women, to prefer the neceſſities of others before their own ſuperfluities and delicacies. Nay, if they look further, and conſider who it is that is perſonated in the poor, that begs in every needy diſtreſſed ſuppliant, and that will finally own every act of mercy as done to himſelf, methinks they ſhould ſometimes think fit to ſacrifice even their moſt moderate enjoyments to their charity, be aſhamed to ſerve themſelves before their Saviour, or let him ſtand naked and hungry, whilſt they are ſolacing with that which would relieve him.

7. But how then ſhall they anſwer it, who ſuffer him to be ſupplanted, not by their needs, but exceſſes; who have ſo devoted their hearts and purſes

purſes to vanity and luxury, that they have neither will nor power to ſuccour the wants of others? How unequal and diſproportionate is it, that thoſe who ſtudy to fling away money upon themſelves, cannot be tempted by any importunity or diſtreſs, to drop an alms to the poor? What a prepoſterous ſight is it to ſee a lady, whoſe gay attire gives her the glittering of the ſun, yet have nothing of its other properties, never to cheer any drooping, languiſhing creature, by her influence? It is the counſel of the ſon of *Sirach*, *not to give the poor any occaſion to curſe thee*, Eccluſ. 4. 5. But ſure ſuch perſons do it, if the poor happen not to have more charity than they exemplify to them. For when they ſhall find ſuch hard hearts under ſuch ſoft raiment, ſee them beſtow ſo much upon the decking their own bodies, and do nothing towards the neceſſary ſupport of theirs, it is a ſhrewd trial of their meekneſs. Poverty is apt of itſelf to imbitter the ſpirit, and needs not ſuch an additional temptation.

8. Nay farther, when a poor ſtarving wretch ſhall look upon one of theſe gay creatures, and ſee that any one of the baubles, the looſeſt appendage of her dreſs, a fan, a buſk, perhaps a black patch, bears a price that would warm his empty bowels; will he not have ſharp incitations,

tions, not only to execrate her pride, and his own poverty; but conſequently to repine at the unequal diſtribution of providence, and add ſin to his miſery? The denial therefore of an alms may be a double cruelty, to the ſoul as well as to the body. It is ſaid of *Xenocrates*, that a chaſed bird flying to his boſom, he reſcued it with much ſatisfaction, ſaying, He had not betrayed a ſuppliant; but this is in that caſe reverſed, and in a higher inſtance; for what can be more the betraying of a ſuppliant, than inſtead of ſupplying his wants, to rob him of his innocence, and be his ſnare inſtead of his refuge? This is a conſideration I wiſh more deeply impreſſed upon the women of this age: and truly it is their concern it ſhould be ſo; for ſince at the laſt day, the inqueſt ſhall be ſo particular upon this very thing, it is but neceſſary they ſhould examine how they are fitted to paſs that teſt.

9. Let them therefore keep a preparatory audit within their own breaſt, reflect upon the expences of their vanity, what the delicacy of their food, what the richneſs and variety of their clothes; nay, what the meer hypocriſies of their dreſs, in falſe hair, and complexions haſt coſt them, to which they may alſo add the charge of their recreations and divertiſements, thoſe coſtly

coſtly arts of chaſing away that time, which they will one day wiſh to recall. Let them, I ſay, compute all this, and then confront to it the account of their charity, and I much fear the latter will with many of them, be comparatively as undiſcernable, as *Socrates* found *Alcibiades*'s lands in the map of the whole world; be ſo perfectly overwhelmed, that it will appear little in their own ſight, and nothing in God's.

10. For if the poor widow's mite acquired a value merely from her poverty, that ſhe had no more; by the rule of contraries we may conclude, how deſpicable the ſcanty oblations of the rich are in God's account. If even their liberality who gave much, was outvied by a farthing, *Mar.* 12, 41. to what point of diminution muſt their niggardly offerings, who give little, be reduced; eſpecially when they ſhall be compared with the numerous and coſtly ſacrifices they make to pride and luxury? Nay, I wiſh ſome were not guilty of more than the diſproportion, even the total omiſſion of charity, that in a multitude of taylor's bills, cannot produce the account of one garment for the poor, that amidſt the delicacies of their own diet, (nay, perhaps of their dogs too) never ordered ſo much as the crumbs of their table

ble to any hungry *Lazarus*. But let all ſuch remember, that there will come a time, when one of *Tabitha*'s coats, *Acts* 9. 39. will be of more value than all their richeſt wardrobes, though they could number gowns with *Lucullus*'s cloaks, which the *Roman* ſtory reports to be 5000. And that when their luxurious fare ſhall only feaſt the worms, and render them paſſive in that epicuriſm they acted before; they will wiſh they had made the bellies of the poor their refectory, and, by feeding them, nouriſhed themſelves to immortality.

11. Let this, I ſay, be ſeriouſly remembered now, leſt hereafter they fall under the ſame exprobrating remembrance with the rich man in the goſpel, Luke 16. 25. *Remember that thou in thy life time receivedſt thy good things, and* Lazarus *that which was evil; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented.* A text which St. *Gregory* profeſſes, was ever ſounding in his ears, and made him look with ſuſpicion and dread upon that grandeur to which he was advanced, as fearing it might be deſigned as his final reward. With what terror then may thoſe look upon their preſent good things, who by engroſſing them wholly to themſelves, own them as their entire portion, and implicitly diſclaim their ſhare of the future? For to that none muſt pretend,

tend, who receive their tranſitory goods under any other notion than that of a ſteward or factor: as we may ſee in the parable of the talents, where thoſe that had the reward of the five and ten cities, were not ſuch as had conſumed their talents upon their own riot and exceſſes, but ſuch as had induſtriouſly employed them according to the deſign of their Lord. And if it there fared ſo ill with the mere unprofitable ſervant, who had hoarded up his talent, what ſhall become of thoſe, who ſquander away theirs, and can give no account either of principal, or uſe?

12. Were theſe conſiderations duly laid to heart, we might hope to ſee ſome of the primitive charity revive, when women of the higheſt rank, converted their ornaments and coſtly deckings, into clothings for the poor, and thought no retinue ſo deſirable, ſo honourable, as a train of alms-folks. But I ſpeak improperly, when I make the poor their attendants, for indeed they rather attended the poor, did not only order the ſupply of their wants, but were themſelves their miniſters, waited about their ſick-beds, dreſſed their moſt loathſome ulcers, and deſcended to all the moſt ſervile offices about them.

13. But,

13. But theſe were ſuch heights, ſuch tranſcendencies of mercy, as required a deeper foundation of humility than will now be often met with; yet let me take the occaſion to ſay, that it may be a good management of a charity, to act (as far as they can) perſonally in it. For beſides that it prevents ſome abuſes and frauds, which deputed agents may ſometimes be tempted to, they pay God a double tribute in it of their perſons, as well as their fortunes. Next, they bring themſelves into acquaintance with the poor, and by that means correct thoſe contempts and nice diſdains, which their own proſperity is too apt to create. Further yet, they excite their own compaſſion, which being a motion of the ſenſitive part of the mind, cannot be ſtirred ſo effectually by any thing, as by the preſence of the object; the moſt pathetic tragical deſcription of a diſtreſs, being not able to affect us half ſo much, as one ocular demonſtration. Laſtly, it is an apt means to increaſe their thankfulneſs to Almighty God, whoſe bounty to themſelves muſt needs make a deeper impreſſion, when it is compared with the neceſſitous condition of others. For things are beſt illuſtrated by their contraries; and it is too obſervable in our depraved nature, that we value not things by their real poſitive worth, but comparatively

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as they excel others; nor ever make a right eſtimate of what we enjoy, till our own, or others wants inſtruct us.

14. Upon all theſe conſiderations, it may be a very becoming uſeful circumſtance in any charitable miniſtry, to be themſelves the actors; and to that end, it will be a very commendable induſtry, to qualify themſelves to be helpful to the poor in as many inſtances as they can; not only opening their purſes, but diſpenſatories too, providing medicines for ſuch, as either by diſeaſe, or caſuality, want that ſort of relief. A charity which, I doubt, is not practiſed by many, and I wiſh it were by more, that our nicer dames, who ſtudy only coſmetics for themſelves, would change the ſcene, and inſtead of repairing or diſguiſing their own complexions, ſtudy the reſtoration of their decrepid patients limbs. And ſure, though it be a leſs faſhionable, it is a much better ſight, to ſee a lady binding up a ſore, than painting her face; and ſhe will caſt a much ſweeter ſavour in God's noſtrils, with the ſmell of unguent and balſams, than with the moſt exquiſite odours and perfumes. For ſince God profeſſes, *Iſa.* 1. that that very *incenſe*, which was deſigned as a part of his worſhip, *was an abomination to him*, becauſe not accompanied with the acts of mercy,

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we cannot think he will better like of thoſe, which have no higher aim than delicacy and ſenſuality.

15. But beſides this part of mercy in giving, there is another; that of forgiving, which may happen to be of a larger extent than the former: for whereas that was confined to the poor, this has no ſuch limits; but as it is poſſible to be injured by perſons of all ranks, ſo this pardoning mercy is to reach equally with that poſſibility. This is that part of charity, which we peculiarly call clemency, a virtue which not only chriſtianity but morality recommends. The ancient Romans had it in ſuch veneration, that they numbered it, not only among virtues, but deities, and built it a temple. And they were ſomewhat towards the right in it: for it was, though not God, yet ſo eminent an attribute of his, that nothing can more aſſimilate man unto him.

16. There are many heroic acts of this kind to be met with among the virtuous heathens. *Lycurgus* not only forgave *Alexander* who ſtruck out his eye, but entertained him in his houſe, and by his gentle admonitions reclaimed him from his former vicious life. *Ariſtides* being, after ſignal ſervices, and without crime, unjuſtly baniſhed by his citizens, was ſo far from act-

ing, or imprecating againſt them, that, at his departure from *Athens*, he ſolemnly prayed the gods, that they might never by any trouble or diſtreſs be forced to recall him. So *Phocion*, being unjuſtly condemned, left it as a ſolemn charge to his ſon *Phocas*, that he ſhould never revenge him. A multitude of the like examples might be produced; but we need not borrow light from their faint tapers, when we have the ſun-beams, I mean the Sun of Righteouſneſs, our bleſſed Saviour; who, as he has recommended this grace by his precept, ſo he has ſignally exemplified it to us in his practice; the whole deſign of his deſcent to earth, being only to reſcue his enemies from deſtruction. And as every part of his life, ſo the laſt ſcene of it was particularly adapted to this end, and his expiring breath was expended in mediating for his crucifiers; *Father, forgive them*, *Luke* 23. 34. And this copy of his was tranſcribed by his firſt followers, the primitive Chriſtians in their ſevereſt martyrdoms, praying for their perſecutors.

17. Thus we are, in the Apoſtle's phraſe, *compaſſed about with a cloud of witneſſes* (*Hebr.* 12. 1.) of eminent examples, which ought to have a forcible influence upon all; but methinks ſhould not fail to have it on that ſex, whoſe native

tive tenderneſs prediſpoſes them to the virtue, and who need but ſwim with the ſtream of their own inclinations. How can we think, that their melting eyes ſhould ever ſparkle fire, or delight in ſpectacles of cruelty? That their flexible tender hearts ſhould turn into ſteel or adamant, be incapable of all impreſſions of pity? Yet God knows, ſuch changes have too often been ſeen: women have not only put off that ſoftneſs peculiar to them, but the common inſtinct of humanity, and have exceeded, not only ſavage men, but beaſts in cruelty. There have been too frequent inſtances of the implacable malice, and inſatiable cruelties of women. I need not call in the aid of poetic fiction, and tell them of *Clytemneſtra*, *Medea*, or the *Belides*, with hundreds of others, celebrated as inſtances of heroic wickedneſs. There are examples enough in more authentic ſtories. The Roman *Tullia*, the Perſian *Pariſatis*, and, that we may not paſs by the ſacred annals, *Jezebel* and *Athaliah*. I forbear to multiply examples of this kind, of which all ages have produced ſome ſo eminent, as have rendered it a common obſervation, that no cruelty exceeds that of an exaſperated woman. And it is not much to be wondered at, ſince nothing can be

ſo ill in its priſtine ſtate, as that which degenerates from a better. No enmity we know ſo bitter, as that of alienated friends; no ſuch perſecution as that of apoſtates, and proportionably, no ſuch ferocity as that of a perverted mildneſs. So that the poets were not much out, who as they repreſented the graces under the figures of women, ſo they did the furies too. And ſince it is in their election which part they will act, they ought to be very jealous over themſelves. The declinations to any vice are gradual, ſometimes at firſt ſcarce diſcernable; and probably the greateſt monſters of cruelty, would at the beginning have deteſted thoſe inhumanities, which afterwards they acted with greedineſs.

18. It concerns them therefore to ward of thoſe beginnings, whoſe end may be ſo fatal. She that is quick in apprehending an affront, perhaps will not be ſo quick in diſmiſſing that apprehenſion; and if it be permitted to ſtay, it will quickly improve: twenty little circumſtances ſhall be ſuborned to foment it with new ſuſpicions, till at laſt it grow to quarrel, from thence to hatred, from that to malice, and from that to revenge: and when that black paſſion has overſpread the mind, like an Egyptian darkneſs,

neſs, it admits no gleam of reaſon, or religion, but hurries the enraged blindfold to their own ruin often, as well as others.

19. Let none think this only a fancy or ſcheme of diſcourſe: there have been too many tragical experiments of its truth. How many men have been mortally engaged upon no weightier original than the ſpleen of a woman; the frantic notion of honour among our duellists, fitly correſponding with the as frantic impulſes of feminine revenge, and any imaginary injury (or perhaps but juſt imputation) to the lady, obliging her gallant to ruſh upon the moſt real ſin and danger? A madneſs ſomething beyond that which the romances deſcribe of knight-errantry: for that generally is for the relief of diſtreſſed damſels; but this is only to humour the too proſperous one, the inſolent and the proud. Thoſe therefore that have obſerved the common occaſions of duels, have not unfitly divided them between wine and women; it being hard to ſay which is the moſt intoxicating and beſotting. The ſon of *Sirach* couples them together, *Eccluſ.* 19. 2. *Wine and women will make men of underſtanding to fall away.* The many modern examples of this miſchief, as they ſhould ſtrike an extreme terror into thoſe women who have been any way acceſſary to the death, or but

danger, of any man; ſo are they juſt matter of caution to all, ſo to regulate their paſſions, that they never come within diſtance of implacability; for if once they arrive there, themſelves can give no ſtop.

20. In order to this, it will be well to conſider at the firſt incitation, what the real ground is: perhaps ſometimes they are angry, (as the Galatians were at St. *Paul*, *Gal.* 4. 10.) *at thoſe that tell them the truth*; ſome ſcandalous, or at leaſt ſuſpicious behaviour, may have engaged a friend to admoniſh them; an office that has ſometimes proved very fatal: thoſe commonly that have moſt guilt, having leaſt patience to hear of it. And if this be the caſe, it is the greateſt injuſtice in the world, to make that a quarrel, which is really an obligation; and therefore inſtead of maligning their monitor, they ought to thank and reverence him. Nay, though the accuſation be not with that candid deſign, but be meant as a reproach; yet if it be true, it ſhould not excite anger at their accuſers, but remorſe, and reformation in themſelves.

21. It was the ſaying of a wiſe man, that he profited more by his enemies than his friends; becauſe they would tell him more roundly of his faults. And this is excellently improved by

Plutarch

Plutarch in his tract, *of the benefits to be reaped from enemies:* ſo that even a malicious accuſation may be a kindneſs, and conſequently ought not to be repaid with an injury. But ſuppoſe in the laſt place, that the aſperſion be not only unkind, but untrue; it will not even then be ſafe, to let looſe to their indignation. Firſt, in reſpect of prudence, an angry vindication ſerving the deſign of the enemy, and helping to ſpread the calumny; whereas a wiſe neglect and diſſembling, does often ſtifle and ſuppreſs it. Secondly, in reſpect of duty, for all that own themſelves Chriſtians, muſt confeſs, they are under an obligation to forgive, and not to revenge. Now if they intend to pay a real obedience to this precept, it will be the more eaſy the ſooner they ſet to it. He that ſets his houſe on fire, will not dally with the flame, much leſs blow or extend it, reſolving to quench it at laſt. And anger is as little to be truſted, which if once thoroughly kindled, will ſcarce expire, but with the deſtruction of the ſubject it works on.

22. Let therefore the diſobliged not look back upon the injury, but forward to thoſe miſchiefs, which too ſharp a reſentment may betray them to: let them conſider, that the boiling of their blood, may finally cauſe the

effuſion of another's, and wrath may ſwell into murder. If they would do this, and inſtead of thoſe magnifying optics wherein they view the wrong, make uſe of the other end of the perſpective, to diſcern the diſmal event at a diſtance, it would ſure fright them from any nearer approach, would keep them within thoſe bounds which their duty preſcribes them, and thereby acquaint them with a much greater, and more ingenuous pleaſure than their higheſt revenge can give them: I mean that of forgiving injuries, and obliging the injurious. This is a pleaſure ſo pure and refined, ſo noble and heroic, that none but rational natures are capable of it; whereas that of ſpite and revenge (if it can be called a pleaſure) is a mere beſtial one: every the moſt contemptible animal, can be angry when it is moleſted, and endeavour to return the miſchief.

23. It ſhould therefore, methinks, be an eaſy determination, whether to embrace that clemency and compaſſion, which we ſee exemplified in the wiſeſt and beſt of men, nay, in the omniſcient, immortal God; or that ſavage fierceneſs of the ignobleſt creatures. This is certain, that no woman would be content to aſſume the outward form of any of thoſe: why then ſhould they ſubject their nobler part, the mind, to ſuch a trans-

a transformation? For as there are no monſters ſo deformed, as thoſe which are compounded of man and beaſt; ſo among them all, nothing can be more unnatural, more odious than a woman-tiger. I conclude all with the advice of *Solomon*, *Prov.* 17. 14. *The beginning of ſtrife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention before it be meddled with.* When once a breach is made upon the ſpirit by immoderate anger, all the conſequent miſchiefs will flow in, like a rapid ſtream, when the banks are broken down; nor is there any way to prevent it, but by keeping the mounds entire, preſerving that tenderneſs and compaſſion, which God and nature do equally enforce and recommend.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

OF AFFABILITY.

1. IN the next place we may reckon Affability and Courteſy, which, as it is amiable in all, ſo it is ſingularly ſo in women of quality, and more univerſally neceſſary in them than in the other ſex. For men have often charges and employments which do juſtify, nay, perhaps, require ſomewhat of ſternneſs and auſterity; but women ordinarily have few or no occaſions of it, and thoſe who have well digeſted the former lectures of meekneſs and compaſſion, will not be apt to put it on unneceſſarily. Now affability may be conſidered, either as a mere human accompliſhment, or as a divine virtue: in either notion it is commendable, but it is the latter that gives it the higheſt excellence and perfection.

2. To begin with the firſt notion of it, we may make an eſtimate of its worth, by its cauſe and by its effects. For its cauſe, it derives itſelf, either from a native candour and generoſity of mind, or from a noble and ingenuous education, or ſometimes jointly from both; and theſe are as good originals, as any thing merely moral can flow from. And that theſe are indeed

deed its ſources, common experience will atteſt; thoſe of the greateſt minds and beſt extractions, being uſually moſt condeſcending and obliging; whereas thoſe of moſt abject ſpirit and birth, are the moſt inſulting and imperious. *Alexander* the Great, though terrible in the field, yet was of a gentle, complaiſant converſation, familiarly treating thoſe about him: yet *Criſpinus*, *Narciſſus*, *Nymphidius*, and other enfranchiſed bond-men, we find inſolently trampling on the Roman ſenators and conſuls. It is therefore a great error for perſons of honour, to think they acquire a reverence, by putting on a ſupercilious gravity, looking coyly and diſdainfully upon all about them; it is ſo far from that, that it gives a ſuſpicion that it is but a pageantry of greatneſs, ſome muſhroom newly ſprung up, that ſtands ſo ſtiff, and ſwells ſo much. But inſtead of teaching others to keep their diſtance, this faſtidious diſdain invites them to a cloſer inſpection, that if there be any flaw either in their life or birth, it will be ſure to be diſcovered, there being no ſuch prying inquiſitor as curioſity, when it is egged on by a ſenſe of contempt.

3. On the other ſide, if we conſider the effects of courteſy, they are quite contrary; it endears to all, and often keeps up a reputation

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in ſpite of any blemiſhes: a kind look or word from a ſuperior, is ſtrangely charming, and inſenſibly ſteals away mens hearts from them. This the wiſe man refers to, *Eccluſ.* 18. 16. when he prefers a word before a gift. And it is *Plutarch*'s obſervation of *Cleomenes*, King of *Sparta*, that when the Grecians compared his affability and eaſineſs of acceſs with the ſullen ſtate and pride of the princes, they were ſo enamoured with it, that they judged him only worthy to be a king. And as there is no certainer, ſo alſo no cheaper way of gaining of love: a friendly ſalutation, is as eaſy as a frown or reproach; and that kindneſs may be preſerved by them, which if once forfeited, will not at a far greater price be recovered.

4. Beſides, when human viciſſitudes are conſidered, it may be a point of prudence too; the greateſt perſons may ſometimes want aſſiſtance from the meaneſt; nay, ſometimes the face of affairs is quite changed, and the wheel of fortune turns them loweſt that were uppermoſt, and proportionably elevates the meaneſt. It is wiſdom, therefore, ſo to treat all, as to leave no impreſſions of unkindneſs, ſince none is ſo deſpicable, but may poſſibly at one time or other, have an opportunity to retaliate. It was therefore a prudent, as well as an equitable reſolution

ſolution of the Emperor, who ſaid, he would ſo entertain the addreſſes of his ſubjects, as, if he were a ſubject, he would wiſh the prince ſhould entertain him: a rule very worthy to ſway all perſons of honour in their intercourſe with others. And ſince even among perſons in command there are degrees, and ſhe which is ſuperior to one, is inferior to another; they have a ready way to compare the civility they pay, with what they expect. Let therefore one who meets with a cold neglectful treatment, from any above her, examine her own reſentments, and then reflect, that if ſhe give the like to thoſe below her, they will doubteſs have the ſame ſenſe; and therefore let her reſolve never to offer what ſhe ſo much diſlikes to bear: and ſhe that does thus, that makes ſuch inferences, will convert an injury into a benefit; civilize herſelf by the rudeneſs of others, and make that ill, nurture her own diſcipline.

5. But hitherto we conſider affability only in its ethnic dreſs, as it is an human ornament: it will appear yet more enamouring upon a ſecond view, when we look on it as bearing the impreſs of the ſanctuary, as a divine virtue. And that it is capable of being ſo, we have the authority of St. *Paul*, who inſerts it in the number of thoſe chriſtian graces which he recommends

mends to his Roman proſelytes; *Condeſcend to men of low eſtate, Rom.* 12. 16. And that we may the better diſcern its value, it is obſervable, that he links it with the moſt eminent virtue of humility; for it immediately follows his precept of, *Be not high minded.* Indeed, it is not only joined with it as a friend or ally, but derived from it as its ſtock and principle, and certainly a more divine extraction it cannot have, humility being the *Alpha* and *Omega* of virtues, that which lays the foundation, (without which the moſt towering ſtructure will but cruſh itſelf with its own weight) and that which perfects and conſummates the building, alſo ſecures and crowns all other graces; which when they are moſt verdant and flouriſhing, are like *Jonas*'s gourd, that may afford ſome ſhadow and refreſhment for a while, but are apt to breed that worm which will deſtroy them. When once they are ſmitten with pride, they inſtantly fade and wither; ſo neceſſary is humility both for the acquiring and conſerving all that is good in us.

6. We may, therefore, conclude, that courteſy and obligingneſs of behaviour, which proceeds thence, is in reſpect of its ſpring and original, infinitely to be preferred before that, which deſcends from no higher ſtock than natural

tural or prudential motives. And ſince it is natural for every production to have ſome ſimilitude to it which produces it, we ſhall find it no leſs excellent, in reſpect of its properties than its deſcent. I ſhall inſtance only in two, ſincerity and conſtancy.

7. For the firſt, as far as affability partakes of humility, it muſt of ſincerity alſo, that being a virtue, whoſe very elements are plainneſs and ſimplicity; for as it has no deſigns which want a cover, ſo it needs none of thoſe ſubtilties and ſimulations, thoſe pretences and artifices requiſite to thoſe that do. It is the precept of the Apoſtle, *Phil.* 2. 3. *In lowlineſs of mind, let each eſteem others better than himſelf:* where we ſee it is the nature of a lowly mind, to transfer that eſteem to others which he ſubtracts from himſelf: now where ſuch an eſteem is planted in the heart, it verifies all the expreſſions and outward ſignifications of reſpect, and renders the greateſt condeſcenſions, (which to an inſolent humour may ſeem extravagant and affected) real and unfeigned.

8. On the contrary, that courteſy which derives no higher than from mere human principles, is not much to be confided in. It is the Pſalmiſt's affirmation *that all men are liars:* and therefore there is more than a poſſibility of deceit

ceit in their faireſt ſhews. Sometimes we know ſmooth and plauſible addreſſes have been deſigned as the ſtale or handle to vile and treacherous practices. The extraordinary blandiſhments and endearing behaviour of *Abſalom* to the people, was only to *ſteal their hearts*, and advance his intended rebellion, 2 *Sam.* 15. and *David* tells us of ſome, *whoſe words are ſofter than butter, having war in their heart; whoſe words were ſmoother than oil, and yet were very ſwords*, *Pſal.* 55. 22. And God knows this age has not ſo much improved in ſincerity, that we ſhould think the ſame ſcenes are not daily acted over among us.

9. But beſides all the blacker projects of this kind, which nothing but the event can detect, there is a lower ſort of this treachery, which is viſible, nay, ſo avowed, that it is one of the moſt common ſubjects of mirth and entertainment: I mean that of ſcoffing and deriſion, a thing too frequent among all; but, I fear I may ſay, very peculiarly among ladies, thoſe at leaſt of the modiſh ſort, their very civilities and careſſes, being often deſigned to gain matter of ſcorn and laughter. Mutual viſits we know are an expreſſion of reſpect, and ſhould flow from a real kindneſs; but if thoſe now in uſe be ſifted, how few will be found of that make? They

They are at the beſt formal, a tribute rather paid to cuſtom than friendſhip, and many go to ſee thoſe, for whom they are perfectly indifferent, whether they find them alive or dead, well or ſick. Nay, very often they are worſe than thus, deſigned only to make obſervations, to bolt out ſomething ridiculous, wherewith to ſport themſelves as ſoon as they are gone; and leſt the inqueſt ſhould return with a *non inventus*, they will accept of the ſlighteſt diſcoveries; the leaſt miſplacing of a word, nay, of a hair, ſhall be theme enough for a comedy.

10. But if a poor country gentlewoman fall within their circuit, what a ſtock of mirth does ſhe afford them; how curiouſly do they anatomiſe every part of her dreſs, her mien, her dialect? Nay, perhaps to improve the ſcene, will recommend yet greater abſurdities to her, under the notion of the mode, that ſo ſhe may be the more ample ſubject of their ſcorn. Such viſits as theſe, are but inſidious intruſions of a ſpy, rather than the good offices of a neighbour; and when it is remembered how great a portion of ſome womens time is ſpent in this kind of diverſion, we muſt conclude, there have a multitude of acts gone to make up the habit. I wiſh they would ſeriouſly reflect on it, and unravel that injurious mirth by a penitential ſadneſs, and ei-

ther ſpend their time better than in viſiting, or elſe direct their viſits to better purpoſes. And this they would certainly do, if they would exchange their mere popular civilities (that kind of paint and varniſh in manners) for that true chriſtian condeſcenſion, which admits of no deceit; but is as tranſparent as *Druſus* wiſhed his houſe ſhould be; that has no ſecret ſcrews and ſprings, to move the eyes or tongue a contrary way from the heart, but is in reality all that it pretends to be.

11. A ſecond property of it is conſtancy, for as it is true to others, ſo it is to itſelf; it is founded on the ſolideſt of virtues, and is not ſubject to thoſe light and giddy uncertainties, that the vulgar civilities are. For, he that out of a diſeſteem of his proper worth, has placed himſelf in a ſtate of inferiority, will think it not an arbitrary matter, but a juſt debt, to pay a reſpect to thoſe he thinks his betters; and an humble mind will in every body find ſomething or other to prefer to himſelf. So that he acts upon a fixed principle, and is not in danger of thoſe contradictions in his manners, which ſhall render him one day ſweet and affable, and another ſour and moroſe. But ſuch mutations are frequently incident to thoſe who are ſwayed by other motives: ſometimes an intereſt changes,

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and then the moſt fawning ſycophant can tranſplant his flatteries, and court a new patron, yea, many times to the deſpite and vilifying of the old.

12. Sometimes again, fortune may change; a man may fall from a proſperous to an adverſe ſtate, and then thoſe who were prodigal of their civilities, whilſt he needed nothing elſe, will withdraw even thoſe from him, leſt they ſhould encourage him to demand ſomething more. An experiment of this *Job* made in his friends, (or rather flatterers) whom he fitly compares to winter brooks, running over when not needed, but quite dry when they are.

13. But the moſt frequent change is, that of fancy and humour, which has a much more general ſway than reaſon and judgment. This is ſo obſervable in the vulgar rabble, that often in an inſtant they will ſhift paſſions, and hate this hour what they doted on the laſt. Of this all popular ſtates have afforded many coſtly experiments; but we need not go farther than the ſacred ſtory, where we find the acclamations and hoſannahs of the multitude, quickly converted into, *crucify him, crucify him*. This levity of mind has been obſerved ſo incident to women, that it is become almoſt proverbial; for by how much their paſſions are

more violent, they are commonly the leſs laſting: and as they are reckoned among thoſe colder bodies that are particularly influenced by the moon, ſo they ſeem to bear a great reſemblance to her in her viciſſitudes and changes; yet ſtill with a greater degree of uncertainty. For ſhe, in all her revolutions, obſerves ſome conſtant periods, and we can tell in her wane when ſhe will be at full; ſo that ſhe has a kind of certainty, even in her planetary errors; but what ephemerides can be framed for ſome womens humours? who can tell how long the preſent will laſt? and what will be the next that will ſucceed?

14. I need not bring inſtances of their inconſtancy, from that common place of paſſionate widows, who have let a new love fail even through thoſe floods of tears, wherewith they bewailed the old. For, beſides that, that is a caſe wherein poſſibly they may find matter enough for retortion, it is here a little wide from my purpoſe, which deſigns no farther inquiſition, than into their ordinary converſation, wherein that love of variety which is ſo remarkable in their habit, their diet, their diverſions, extends itſelf often to their company, their friendſhips alſo and converſe. Thoſe intimacies which they cheriſhed lately, quickly grow deſpicable,

picable, and at laſt nauſeous, and conſequently their behaviour falls from kind and civil, to cold and diſdainful. I doubt not this has often been proved by many of thoſe humble companions, which officiouſly attend them, who cannot always fix themſelves, no not by thoſe flatteries that firſt introduced them; ſome new comer perhaps, has better refined the art, and does the ſame thing more acutely and ingeniouſly, and then the old one is to be turned off, as too groſs a ſycophant. Or if they have been ſo happy as to light upon ſome of a more generous temper, who, inſtead of a ſervile compliance with their humour, and high characters of their worth, entertain them with the true images of themſelves, and endeavour to make what others only ſpeak them; this is that unpardonable crime which forfeits all degrees of favour, and does not only avert, but incenſe. A faithful monitor is as unacceptable as a true looking-glaſs to a deformed perſon, which at the beſt will be ſet aſide, and eſcapes well if not broken; and while great perſons diſpenſe their favours or their frowns, by ſuch perverſe meaſures as theſe, they will be ſure to do it unjuſtly, as well as unconſtantly.

15. I am far from making this an univerſal charge; I know there are women of the higheſt

quality, that guide themſelves by other rules, that are deaf to all the ſongs of *Syrens*, and have the prudence to value a ſeaſonable reproof, before the moſt extravagant panegyric; but this is owing to that humility which I am now recommending, without which it is as impoſſible for greatneſs to be proof againſt flattery, as it is for a pinnace with ſpreading ſails, and a violent guſt of wind, to ſail ſteadily without ballaſt. And the frequent want of this is it, which makes it no leſs frequent to ſee thoſe unevenneſſes and inequalities in behaviour, thoſe partialities in diſpenſing even the commoneſt civilities, which I have now repreſented.

16. And ſure it is none of the meaneſt attributes due to that excellent virtue of humility, that it can thus fix and poiſe the mind, cure thoſe vertigoes and giddy humours, incident to thoſe who are mounted aloft: and above all, that it is a ſure antidote againſt the moſt inſinuating poiſon of flattery, a holy ſpell or amulet againſt the venom of a paraſite, which the Philoſopher juſtly calls the worſt of tame beaſts, as a detractor is of wild: he being indeed a kind of vulture, in the way of ſeizure, no leſs than rapine, who firſt picks out the eyes of that which he deſigns to prey upon; ſuffering not the perſon concerned to ſee any thing of that deſtruction

ſtruction which he is to feel. And certainly none of the ominous birds, no night-raven or ſcreech-owl, can abode half ſo diſmally as theſe domeſtic birds of prey, which are not only preſages, but inſtruments of ruin whereſoever they haunt.

17. It is therefore the univerſal concern of thoſe that are great and proſperous, to chaſe them away, as *Abraham* did the fowls from his ſacrifice, *Gen.* 15. 11. but yet more peculiarly ſo of thoſe to whom fortune has given a ſudden riſe, and unexpected grandeur, they being of all others the moſt obnoxious to this ſort of harpies. The ſurpriſes of proſperity do no leſs diſturb the judgment, than thoſe of adverſity: and as one who is in an inſtant ſnatched up to ſome high tower, is ſo amazed to ſee himſelf there, that he has no juſt meaſure of the altitude, but thinks every thing farther below him than it is; ſo they that aſcend to greatneſs by ſwift and rapid motions, have their heads ſo turned that they are apt to overvalue it, and to look with contempt on thoſe whom before perhaps they thought worth their envy. And on a mind thus prepared flattery may make any impreſſion, it ſuborning even Providence, as a witneſs on its ſide, and inferring from the dig-

nities obtained, the tranſcending merit of the obtainer. A piece of ſophiſtry which the ſlighteſt obſerver may eaſily confute, all ages giving inſtances of thoſe whoſe vices have preferred them, and, by a ſtrange chemiſtry, have extracted honour out of infamous acts. Yet to a mind poſſeſſed with its own admiration, this ſhall paſs for a demonſtration. So treacherous a thing is pride, that it combines with all who deſign to cheat us; and indeed it is not only an acceſſary, but the principal; none being in danger by others flatteries, who are not firſt ſeduced by their own.

18. It will therefore be a point of wiſdom for all perſons of honour, to increaſe their caution with their fortune, and as they multiply their revenues without, ſo eſpecially to enforce their guard within, that they become not ſlaves to their own greatneſs, fix not themſelves in ſuch a poſture of ſtate, as to become immoveable to all the offices of humanity and civility, nor think that their admiſſion to greatneſs, is upon the ſame terms on which the Jews were wont to receive their proſelytes, that they muſt renounce all their former relations; but to remember that they differ no more from others, than as a counter ſet in the place of thouſands or hundreds,

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does from one ſet in the place of tens or units. A little tranſpoſition may quite alter the caſe; or, however, when they are all taken off the ſcore, they are then indiſcriminately tumbled together, and one has no precedence of another, either in place or value. So undiſcernible will be the difference between the greateſt Queen, and the meaneſt ſervant, when death, that great leveller, ſhall have mixed them; there will be no inquiſition in the grave, who came embalmed or perfumed thither; and, as a learned man ſays, the ulcers of *Lazarus* will make as good duſt as the paint of *Jezebel*.

19. But I ſhall be thought to have outrun my ſubject, or inſtead of that amiable image of affability, and univerſal obligingneſs, the great ornament of life, to introduce the grim figure of death, that ſullen executioner, whom no gift, no prayers can mollify. Yet I cannot yield it wholly impertinent; for as its final ſtroke cures all the infirmities of the body, ſo the foreſight and contemplation of it, is as much a catholicon for all the maladies of the mind; eſpecially that of inſolence and diſdain. For ſure they cannot much pride themſelves in an exaltation, that remember they muſt finally fall into the duſt: not arrogantly deſpiſe others, who conſider that themſelves

themſelves ſhall one day be inſulted over by worms and inſects. Such mental deſcents into the vault or charnel-houſe, are the beſt diſciplines for the demeanour in other places, according to the admonition of the wiſe man, *Remember thy end, and thou ſhalt never do amiſs.*

SECT.

SECT. V.

OF PIETY.

1. LASTLY, To complete and crown all other excellencies, nothing is ſo proper, ſo neceſſary, as Piety and Devotion. This is the ſalt which ſeaſons all ſacrifices; yea, the altar which ſanctifies the gift; no good (how ſplendid ſoever in the ſight of man) being acceptable to God, till it be thus conſecrated, and have this ſeal of the ſanctuary upon it. This is a virtue truly divine, as well in its original as its end; for as it comes from Heaven, is an afflation of the Bleſſed Spirit, ſo it tends thither alſo, and thither raiſes its votaries. This is it which ſublimates and ſpiritualizes humanity, defecates and refines it from all the dregs of mortality, and ſo wings our earthly lumpiſh nature, that we can ſoar aloft to the region of ſpirits, and by its raptures, make ſome eſſay of that ſtate of ſeparation, even while we are linked to the body. This is it which combines us ſo with God, that we have the ſame intereſt, the ſame choices; nay, it does in a ſort communicate and interchange properties with him; the all-powerful God ſeems impotent, and unable to

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reſiſt its influence, whilſt it inveſts us feeble wretches in a kind of omnipotency, by engaging him for us who can do all things.

2. Now this piety may be conſidered either in a larger or more limited ſenſe: in the former it is as wide as the whole ſcheme of duty, not confined to any one act, but extended to all the commands of God. For as the animal ſpirit diffuſes itſelf into all the moſt diſtant members of the body: ſo this more vital principle, has as univerſal an influence on the mind; ſtamps that with ſuch an admiration and reverence of God, ſuch a love and complacency in him, that every act is (at leaſt habitually) deſigned to obey and glorify him.

3. In the more limited ſenſe, piety is taken for our more immediate intercourſe with God, in things purely divine, as adorations, prayers, aſpirations, and all pantings and breathings of the ſoul after him; and in this notion it is more particularly called, Devotion. And this is comprehended in the other, as a part in the whole; nay, indeed, as an effect in its cauſe; for where piety has not firſt formed and modelled the ſoul, there can be no true devotion. External forms of it there may be, but theſe are but ceremony and pageantry, the moſt ſubmiſſive proſtrations are there but like that of *Dagon* before

fore the ark, the fall of a lifeleſs trunk; the moſt elevated eyes, but a kind of convulſive motion; and the moſt rigid mortifications, but the cuttings and lancings of *Baal*'s prieſts. Of this the very heathens had ſome notion, and therefore in their worſhips had many preparatory ceremonies of luſtration and purifying, as being conſcious of the incongruity, that unholy perſons ſhould be admitted to ſacred things. And accordingly *Socrates* has excellently (I had almoſt ſaid evangelically) defined, *the beſt way of worſhipping of God*, to be *the doing what he commands*. Indeed, without this, our devotion is mere ſtratagem and deſign; we invoke God as we uſe to cajole men, only to ſerve a preſent turn; and of ſuch diſingenuous addreſſes; it is eaſy to read the event, or if we cannot, *Solomon* will inſtruct us, *Prov.* 15. 8. *The prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.*

4. To treat of the ſeveral branches of piety in the firſt notion, is not agreeable to the intended brevity of this treatiſe; nor neceſſary, becauſe there are ſo many diſtinct tracts extant on that ſubject; yet, I ſhall the more cloſely, to adapt it to my female readers, obſerve the propriety of it to women, not only as it is their greateſt ornament and advantage; but eſpecially

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as they have ſomewhat more of pre-diſpoſition towards it in their native temper. God's laws, which are the rule of piety, have this common with mens, that they are inforced upon us by the propoſals both of puniſhments and rewards, by that means engaging two of our moſt ſenſible paſſions, fear and love; and the female ſex being eminent for the pungency of both theſe, they are conſequently the better prepared for the impreſſions of religion.

5. This is ſo much acknowledged, that our maſculine atheiſts make an ill uſe of it, and are willing to think, that religion owes its force only to the impotence of the ſubject on which it works, that it is only an impoſition upon the eaſy credulity of women, and are content to allow them the incloſure of it; wherein, though they ſufficiently ſhew their contempt of piety, yet they unawares give a greater honour to that ſex than they intend, whilſt they confeſs it more capable of an aſſimilation to the ſupreme goodneſs, and of the renewal of God's image (for to that all piety is deſigned) than their own. And therefore women have ſo little reaſon to be aſhamed, that they ought to glory in the conceſſion, and gratefully to celebrate the goodneſs of God to them, who, as he brings light out of darkneſs, ſo converts their natural infirmities into

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a means of ſpiritual ſtrength, makes the impotencies and defects of their nature ſubſervient to the operations of grace, and, by conſecrating their very paſſions, makes even thoſe *Gibeonites* ſerviceable to the tabernacle. But then it is to be remembered, that the greater is their obligation to comply with this deſign of God's, to let their paſſions run in the channel he has cut for them; ſo to confine their fear and love to ſpiritual objects, that they make no inordinate eruptions to any thing elſe; all their eſtimations of things dreadful or deſirable, giving ſtill the juſt deference to that which is eternal.

6. And as women in general have this advantage towards piety, and obligation to it, ſo particularly thoſe of quality, whom we may ſuppoſe to have generally a more early inſtitution and inſtruction in it, than thoſe of a meaner rank: and, beſides, have afterwards more opportunities of being built up in the knowledge of their duty, and (by the help of an ingenuous education) clearer apprehenſions to diſcern it; and when they do ſo, have greater obligations to perform it, both in reſpect of God, of others, and themſelves.

7. In reſpect of God they have the greateſt tie of gratitude, not only for the common mercies which they partake with the reſt of mankind,

kind, but for those peculiar, by which they are differenced from others. Of which, if they want a just value, let them ask themselves how willing they would be to part with them; how she that has fed delicately, would like to be desolate in the street, or *she that has been brought up in scarlet, to embrace the dunghill, Lam.* 4. 5. and according to the aversion they find to such a change, let them estimate their present enjoyment, and the thankfulness it exacts.

8. Secondly, in regard of others, their piety supported by their secular advantages, may be of more extensive benefit; they have many opportunities of doing good by their influence on others; or if no way else, yet the splendour of their example, will, by the eminency of their conditions, shine (as a light on some high tower) more perspicuously, and guide many into the same path of virtue. And certainly it is no small obligation that lies on them in this respect; for God, who does nothing without an end worthy of his wisdom, can never be thought to have selected some persons as the objects of his bounty, merely that they may swill and glut themselves with sensual pleasures. No, doubtless he who is the great Master of the Universe, disposes all things for common benefit; and therefore, if he have placed some in an higher

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orb than others, it is that they may have an auſpicious influence on thoſe below them; and if they fail in this, they are no longer ſtars, but comets, things of ominous and unlucky abode to all about them. I might enlarge on this ſubject; but having done it already in the *Gentleman's Calling*, I ſuppoſe it unneceſſary, ſince that part is equally adapted to both ſexes.

9. In the laſt place, they have all obligations to piety, in reſpect of themſelves, and that in two conſiderations: the firſt, of their preſent danger; the ſecond, of their final account. For their danger; it is evident they do not more out-number their inferiors in any thing than in the opportunities, nay, ſolicitations to ſin. Wealth and honour have many ſnares, and, which is worſe, do often diſpoſe the mind to ſuch a heedleſs ſecurity, that it takes no care to avoid them: and as in the body, the diſeaſes of repletion are far more numerous than thoſe of emptineſs, ſo the mind is oftener vitiated by affluence and proſperity than by indigency and adverſity. It becomes, therefore, thoſe who are ſo ſurrounded with enemies, to fortify themſelves: and that they can no way do, but by a ſincere piety, that *whole armour of God*, which the Apoſtle deſcribes, *Epheſ.* 6. 13. *by which alone they may repel all the darts of temptations.*

Nay, not only ward the blow, but wreſt the weapon out of Satan's hand. So that when he urges to them the opportunities, the impunity which their wealth and greatneſs give them to be bad, they may retort this argument, and by a wholeſomer inference collect thence their great obligation to be good; and that not only upon the ſcore of gratitude, though that were enough to an ingenuous ſoul, but in the ſecond place of intereſt alſo, in reſpect of that account they muſt finally give. For, though God be not an unjuſt exactor, to reap where he has not ſown, yet he is not ſo negligently profuſe, as to do that which no prudent man will do, ſcatter his goods promiſcuouſly, without taking notice where they fall; but as he diſpenſes all things by a particular providence, ſo he does it to a particular end, and will exact as particular an account, how that end has been complied withal.

10. It is a ſmart exprobration of God's to *Iſrael*, *Ezek.* 16, 17, 18, 19. that ſhe had ſacrilegiouſly employed his *ſilver and gold, his oil, his flour and honey, which he had given her, in the ſervice of her idols*, by which, as we may ſee, he takes notice how we diſpoſe of our temporal poſſeſſions, ſo it ſhews us how the indictment will proceed againſt all thoſe who ſo pervert their uſe. With what confuſion muſt they appear

pear at the great audit, who can give no other account of their receipts, but that they conſumed them upon their luſts, waged war againſt God with his own treaſure, and been as well thieves as rebels? What a luciferian fall will they have from their honours, who have endeavoured to undermine God's; thought themſelves too great to pay him homage, and by their profane and vicious example, induced a contempt of him? In ſhort, what a retaliation of inverſions will there then be? Thoſe that have turned God's grace into wantonneſs, converted his bounty into the fuel of their pride and luxury, ſhall then have their glory turned into ſhame, their riots and exceſſes into the want of a drop of water, and ſhall retain nothing of their greatneſs, but the guilt, the grating remembrance of having abuſed thoſe temporal bleſſings, which, if well managed, might have received them into everlaſting habitations. How neceſſary then is it for all who have received ſo much upon account, to be often reflecting on it, examining what charges the great owner has impoſed upon ſo ample an income? what God requires of them for whom he hath done ſo much? And this is particularly the buſineſs of piety, which in all the

fore-mentioned reſpects, is as the uſefulleſt, ſo the nobleſt accompliſhment of greatneſs.

11. And ſuch it hath been accounted till this profane age of ours, which has removed all the boundaries of the former, reverſed even the inſtincts of nature, and will not leave us ſo much of religion as the very worſt of heathens had. For how erroneous ſoever they were in the choice of their deities, they always honoured and reverenced thoſe they choſe, committed moſt of their enormities in obedience, not in affront to them: did not aſſign their votaries, as *Jeroboam* did his prieſts, of the meaneſt of the people; but thought themſelves dignified by their ſervice, and eſteemed it an infamy not to be pious. But, alas! we now a-days make other eſtimates; religion is ſo abject, ſo contemptible a thing, as is thought fit to influence none that are great, either in parts or quality: and, therefore, though too many are willing to appropriate it to women, upon the firſt account, *as the goſpel is the fooliſhneſs of preaching*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 21. yet they make exceptions upon the latter, and are not willing to afford it any of the nobler proſelytes even of that ſex.

12. I doubt not there are many lectures read to ſuch, to fortify them againſt all impreſſions

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of piety, to raze out the common notions of a God, and in order to that, to depoſe his vicegerent within them, diſcard their conſcience, that unmannerly inmate, which is ſtill ſpeaking what they have no mind to hear, and will be apt ſometimes to queſtion their grand principle, and tell them they have ſouls. And truly it is no wonder if the abettors of atheiſm take this courſe; for, ſince they have no ſolid foundation of truth or reaſon, it is but neceſſary they ſupport their party by authority; the countenance and applauſe of great perſons: and God knows they have too much ſucceeded in the deſign. But in the mean time, what ſecurity do they give for the truth of their pretenſions? We know it is ſtill required of thoſe that will practiſe upon other people's concerns, that they put in caution to ſecure the owner from damage. But alas! what gage can they give for a ſoul? Who can contrive a form of indemnity, where that is the thing hazarded?

13. It is eaſy indeed for one of theſe apoſtles of *Satan*, to tell a lady that ſhe has nothing to do, but to indulge to her pleaſure; that it is the extremeſt folly to be frighted from a preſent enjoyment, by a fear of I know not what future ſmart; that God, and ſin, and hell, are but names, certain mormios and bug-bears, con-

jured up by divines, to work upon her fear, and abuſe her credulity. This, and much more of this kind may be ſaid, and I doubt often is; but all this while the queſtion is begged, and a ſtrong affirmation muſt paſs for proof: for I defy all the doctors of atheiſm, to make any demonſtration of their tenet; and yet, though they pretend to no demonſtration themſelves, religion muſt be condemned merely for the want of it: that is, for not making ſpiritual things liable to ſenſe, for diſtinguiſhing between belief and ſcience; which is indeed for doing the moſt reaſonable thing in the world, *viz.* the remitting every object to the trial of its proper faculty: and they who ſuſpect it upon that account, may by the ſame kind of logic wrangle us out of all our ſenſes, may perſuade us we hear nothing, becauſe the eye diſcerns not ſounds; that we taſte not, becauſe the ear underſtands not guſts and ſavours, and ſo on to the reſt.

14. And yet this is the bottom of thoſe arguments, which the great pretenders of reaſon make againſt religion; and in the mean time have ſo little ingenuity as to exclaim on the light credulity of fools and women, that embrace the dictates of faith, whilſt at the ſame inſtant they exact a more implicit aſſent to their negative

negative articles, their no-religion. A ſtrange magiſterial confidence ſo to impoſe on this age, what is ſo univerſally contradictory to all former, and to the common verdict of mankind. For it is obſervable through all the ſucceſſions of men, that there were never any ſociety, any collective body of atheiſts. A ſingle one might perhaps be here and there found, (as we ſee ſometimes monſters or miſhapen births,) but for the generality, they had always ſuch inſtincts of a deity; that they never thought they ran far enough from atheiſm; but rather choſe to multiply their gods, to have too many than none at all; nay, were apt to deſcend to the adoration of things below themſelves, rather than to renounce the power above them. By which we may ſee, that the notion of a God is the moſt indelible character of natural reaſon; and therefore whatever pretence our atheiſts make to ratiocination and deep diſcourſe, it is none of that primitive fundamental reaſon coæval with our humanity; but is indeed a reaſon fit only for thoſe, who own themſelves like the beaſts that periſh.

15. But admit we could be more bountiful to them, and allow their opinion an equal probability with our faith, yet even this could never juſtify any body in point of prudence, that

ſhould adhere to them. Common diſcretion teaches us, that where two propoſitions have an equal appearance of truth, there is no rational inducement to prefer one before the other, till we have examined the conſequences, and find ſomething in the one, which may over-poiſe and outweigh the contrary. Now in all things that concern practice, there are no motives ſo conſiderable, either to invite or avert, as advantage and danger.

16. Let us apply this to the preſent caſe, and examine the pretenſions of the atheiſt and the chriſtian in both reſpects. But firſt, we are to remember, that both advantage and danger are to be viewed under a double notion, either as preſent or as future. The former is the atheiſt's moſt proper ſubject, and indeed all that he can pertinently ſpeak to, who profeſſes himſelf only a man of this world. Here he will tell us, that the diſbelief of God and another life, is the great enfranchiſer of mankind, ſets us at liberty from that thraldom, thoſe bonds, wherewith our ſuperſtitious fears had fettered us; that it ſuperſedes all thoſe nice and perplexing enquiries of lawful and unlawful, and reduces all our inquiſitions only to this one, how we ſhall moſt pleaſe ourſelves. The glutton need not put a knife to his throat; but

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is only to put an edge upon his palate. The drunkard need not refrain his cups, but only take care that they be filled with the moſt delicious liquor. The wanton need not pull out his eye; but only contrive to poſſeſs that which tempts him to deſire; and, in a word, none of our appetites need be reſtrained, but ſatisfied. And this uncontrolled licentiouſneſs, this brutiſh liberty, is that *ſummum bonum*, that ſupreme happineſs which they propoſe to themſelves, and to which they invite others.

17. On the other ſide, the Chriſtian is not without his claim to a preſent advantage, though of a far differing nature. He is not ſo prepoſterous, as to think it a preferment to ſink below his kind; to aſpire to an aſſimilation with mere animals, which is the utmoſt the former amounts to, but he propoſes to himſelf the ſatisfaction of a man, thoſe delights which may entertain his reaſon, not his ſenſe, which conſiſt in the rectitude of a well-informed mind. His religion is the perfecteſt ſcheme of morality, and makes him a philoſopher without the help of ſchools: it teaches him the art of ſubduing his appetites, calming his paſſions, and, in a word, makes him lord of himſelf; and by that gives him all the pleaſures which reſult from ſuch a ſovereignty. Nor is he totally void even

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of the pleaſures of ſenſe, which in many inſtances are greater to him than to thoſe that moſt court them. Temperance cooks his coarſeſt diet to a greater guſt than all their ſtudied mixtures; chaſtity makes one lawful embrace more grateful to him, than all the nauſeating variety of their unbounded luſts; and contentment ſwells his mite into a talent, makes him richer than the *Indies* would do, if he deſired beyond them. Nor is it a contemptible benefit, that his moderation gives him an immunity from thoſe ſenſitive pains, which oft bring up the rear of inordinate ſenſual pleaſures. So that his condition, even ſet in the worſt light, in that very particular wherein the atheiſt moſt triumphs over him, is not ſo deplorable as it is repreſented.

18. But if it were, he has pleaſures that would infinitely overwhelm that ſmart, and that not only in his reaſon, (as hath been ſaid before) but in his more ſublime diviner part, ſuch irradiations from above, ſuch ante-paſts of his future bliſs, ſuch acquieſcence in a calm and ſerene conſcience, as is very cheaply bought with all he can ſuffer here. I know the profane laugh at theſe things as chimeras, and the illuſions of a prepoſſeſſed fancy: and truly, if they were ſo, they might yet

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come in balance with many of their pleaſures, which are as much owing to opinion and imagination: but if we conſider what ſupports they have given under the heavieſt preſſures, how they enabled the primitive martyrs, not only to ſuffer, but even to court all that is formidable to human nature, we cannot think that a mere fantaſtic imaginary joy, could deceive the ſenſe of ſuch zeal, ſuch acute torments. And though in this great declination of zeal, there be perhaps few that can pretend to thoſe higher degrees of ſpiritual raptures, yet certainly were the votes of all devout perſons collected, they would all concur in this teſtimony, that even in the common offices of piety, the ordinary diſcharge of a good conſcience, there is an infinitely greater complacency, a higher guſt and reliſh, than in all the pleaſures of ſenſe. But of this the moſt irrefragable witneſſes are thoſe, who from great voluptuaries have turned devotees, and I dare appeal to their experience, whether of the two ſtates is the moſt pleaſant. I wiſh thoſe that will not believe this on other words, would themſelves make the trial, and till they do ſo, they are notoriouſly unjuſt to pronounce that a fiction, of whoſe reality they refuſe to make proof.

19. By

19. By what hath been ſaid, ſome eſtimate may be made which bids faireſt (the atheiſt or chriſtian) as to preſent temporal felicity: but alas! what an allay, what a damp is it to felicity to ſay it is temporal; yet we may give it a term below that, and ſay, it is momentary. For, ſince our life is ſo, nothing that depends on that can be otherwiſe, and yet, in this ſhallow bottom, the irreligious embark their *all.* For, as to all future advantage, it is their principle to diſclaim it, they diſcern *no reward for blameleſs ſouls, Wiſd.* 2. 22. So that in this particular the chriſtian does not compare with, but triumph over them. *He knows that if this earthly houſe of his tabernacle be diſſolved, he hath a building of God; an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens,* 2 Cor. 5. 1. That when he parts with his life, he does not reſign his happineſs, but ſhall receive it infinitely improved both in degree and duration. And now certainly it is viſible enough, which opinion propoſes the fairer hopes, and conſequently which (ſuppoſing but an equal probability of truth) is the moſt inviting.

20. But ſome ſpirits there are ſo ignoble, that the moſt glorious prize cannot animate them: that like the ſwine, the muſcles of whoſe

whoſe eyes, they ſay, permit him not to look upward, are not concerned in all the felicities above, but would at a venture reſign their ſhare in thoſe, ſo they may ſecurely enjoy their huſk and draff. But yet even thoſe who are incapable of the more generous reſentments, may be apt enough to the more ſervile; and danger may fright, though glory cannot allure them. It concerns ſuch, therefore, to compare the miſchiefs which each opinion threatens to their oppoſites, and from thence make an eſtimate which is ſafeſt to be choſen. And here let the atheiſt himſelf caſt up the account of the dangers conſequent to chriſtianity, and it can all amount but to this, the deprivation, or rather moderation, of ſome preſent ſenſual pleaſures, or the incurring of ſome preſent ſenſitive pains; the former in the daily exerciſe of temperance and mortification; the latter, (more rarely and oftener in purpoſe than act) the ſuffering for righteouſneſs ſake. And both theſe the chriſtian balances, nay, outweighs, by two more important preſent hazards on the other ſide. To the former, he oppoſes the danger of being enſlaved to the brutiſh part of a man's ſelf, a thing ſo deplorable even in the judgment of humanity, that all writers of ethics have uniformly

formly declared, no ſervility to be ſo ſordid and intolerable, as that of the vicious man to his paſſions and luſts. To the latter, he confronts the miſchief of being a ſlave to every man elſe, for ſuch he certainly is, whom the fear of ſuffering can baffle out of any thing he thinks juſt and honeſt. For, if all the men in the world could ſucceſſively have the power to afflict him, they would alſo have to command and rule him; and what can be more abject, more below the dignity of human nature, than to have a ſpirit always prepared for ſuch a ſervitude? Beſides, even the utmoſt ſuffering which chriſtianity can at any time require, is out-vied daily by the effects of luxury and rage; and for one that has opportunity to be a martyr for his God, thouſands become ſo to their vices.

21. If from the preſent we look forward to future dangers, the atheiſt muſt here be perfectly ſilent; he cannot ſay that the chriſtian after this life ſhall be in any worſe eſtate than himſelf, ſince he concludes they ſhall both be the ſame nothing; but the chriſtian threatens him with a more diſmal ſtate. He allows him, indeed, a being, yea, an eternal one; but it is only ſuch as qualifies him for a miſery as eternal: the worm that never dies, the fire unquenchable,

unquenchable, where all the exceſſes of his ſhort pleaſures ſhall be avenged with more exceſſive, endleſs torments. His ſenſes, which were here the only organs of his felicity, ſhall then be, though not the only, the very ſenſible mediums of his wretchedneſs; and that conſcience which he here ſuſpended from its office, ſhall then take out its arrears, and return all its ſtifled admonitions in perpetual horrors, and deſperate upbraidings. I need not now ſure aſk on which ſide the greater danger lies.

22. To conclude, the reſult of all is, that the tranſitory pleaſures of the atheiſt are overpoiſed, even by the preſent ſatisfactions of the pious. And the eternity of unbounded, inconceivable joys he expects hereafter, comes in abundantly, having nothing on the other ſide that offers at a competition with it. And at the very ſame rate of proportion, we have ſeen the dangers alſo are ſo, that we can eaſily compute the utmoſt miſchief our chriſtianity can do us, if it ſhould be falſe; but the damage of the other is ineſtimable, both for the penalty of loſs and ſenſe. I may now appeal to common prudence, to judge of the vaſt inequality, and to pronounce, that ſure there had need be ſome great evidence of truth on the atheiſt's ſide, to preponderate all theſe diſadvantages.

vantages. Indeed, nothing much below a demonſtration can juſtify the choice of ſo dangerous principles; I am ſure an equal probability can never do it, where the danger is ſo unequal; and were the verieſt atheiſt conſulted in a ſecular caſe of the like circumſtances, he would certainly pronounce him a mad man that ſhould make ſuch an election. How deſperate a phrenzy then is it to do it, without ſo much as that of equal probability; nay, indeed, without any probability at all? And yet this madneſs ſets up for the monopoly, not of wit only, but reaſon too; and by confidence and clamour, ſeeks to run down thoſe arguments it can never confute.

23. I may be thought here to have made too long a digreſſion from my proper ſubject, but cannot confeſs it ſo; for ſince my preſent buſineſs is to recommend piety, I can no way do that ſo effectually as by ſhewing its conſonancy to right reaſon, eſpecially conſidering the buſy induſtry now uſed to repreſent it under another form, and to alienate from it thoſe perſons, whoſe greatneſs may give it any luſtre or repute in the world; of which ſort I ſuppoſe there are few more frequently attacked than women of quality, that converſe among thoſe who call themſelves the *wits* of the *age*; who, living

living in ſo infectious an air, had need of ſome antidotes about them; and if what I have now offered, appear not forcible enough, (for it pretends not to the tythe of what may be ſaid on the ſubject) yet it may at leaſt do them this ſervice, to put them in mind of what they need, and ſend them to the fuller diſpenſatories of others.

24. And that is the thing I ſhould earneſtly beg of them, that they would be ſo juſt to their own intereſt, as not to combine with ſeducers againſt themſelves; but if they have been ſo unhappy as to lend one ear unto them, yet at leaſt not to give up both to be forced into a ſlaviſh ſubmiſſion to their dictates, but hear what may be ſaid on the other ſide. And ſure it is but a low compoſition for God thus to divide with Satan; yet it is that of which his emiſſaries are ſo jealous, that it is one of their grand maxims, that none who profeſſes divinity is to be adviſed withal; and therefore by all arts they are to be rendered, either ridiculous or ſuſpected, to which methinks may be applied that fable (which *Demoſthenes* once recited to the *Athenians*, when *Alexander* demanded of them to deliver up their orators) of the wolves and the ſheep, who, coming to a treaty, the firſt article of the wolves was, that

the ſheep ſhould give up their maſtives which guarded them: the reſemblance is too obvious to need a minute application.

25. But this is manifeſtly to reverſe all former rules, and to truſt a man rather in any faculty than his own, and would never have prevailed in any thing, but where the ſoul is concerned, that poor deſpicable thing, whereon alone we think fit to make experiments. It is ſure, that if any ſhould diſpute their title to an earthly poſſeſſion, they would not ſo tamely reſign it, nor would truſt their own ſelves in its defence, but would conſult their ableſt lawyers, and by them, ſift out every circumſtance that might eſtabliſh their claim. Why ſhould they then ſuffer themſelves to be talked out of an heavenly inheritance, without ſo much as once propoſing their doubts to thoſe, whoſe ſtudy and profeſſion it is to reſolve them? But, as in all other ills, ſo in this, prevention is better than cure; and, therefore, to thoſe that are yet untainted, the ſecureſt courſe will be to ſtop their ears againſt all profane inſinuations; and to uſe thoſe who tempt them to be diſloyal to their God, that ſpiritual adultery, as they ſhould do thoſe who ſolicit them to the carnal, not ſo much as to enter parly; but with the greateſt indignation de-

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teſt and reject them. It is the ſaying of the wiſe man, *Prov.* 25. 23. that *an angry countenance driveth away a back-biting tongue.* And certainly, would great perſons look ſeverely on ſuch defamers of religion, they would give ſome check to that impudence of profaneneſs, which has given it ſuch a vogue in the world.

26. And ſure this is much their duty to do, if they own any relation to that God who is ſo diſhonoured. They would think it a very diſingenuous thing to ſit by to hear a friend or benefactor reviled, and expreſs no diſpleaſure; and is God ſo friendleſs among them, that only his traducers and blaſphemers can be patiently heard? Among the Jews, at the hearing of any blaſphemy, they rent their clothes; but I fear we have ſome of our nice dames that would be much more concerned at a rip in their garment, than at the rending and violating God's ſacred name; and could more patiently behold the total ſubverſion of religion, than the diſorder or miſplacing a lock or ribband. But it is to be hoped there are not many ſo impious; and thoſe that are not, will ſurely think themſelves obliged with all their power, to diſcountenance all the favourers of irreligion, whether they be the ſo-

lemn ſedater ſort, that would argue, or the jollier, that would rally them out of their faith.

27. But when they have thus provided againſt the aſſaults of others, and ſecured the ſpeculative part of religion, they have only eſtabliſhed a judicatory againſt themſelves, ſtored up matter of conviction and accuſation, if they anſwer it not in the practice. I muſt, therefore, after this long excurſion, return to my firſt point, and beſeech them ſeriouſly to weigh the obligations they have to piety in the general notion of it, as it comprehends all the duties of a chriſtian life; of which, as I intend not to ſpeak particularly, ſo I know not where to find a better ſummary, than that which St. *James* has drawn up, *chap.* 1. *ver.* 27. *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to viſit the fatherleſs and widows in their affliction, and to keep himſelf unſpotted from the world.*

28. But beſides this general, there is, (as I ſaid before) another more reſtrained notion of piety, as it relates to our more immediate intercourſe with God, in divine ordinances and worſhip; in which reſpect it commonly paſſes under the name of devotion, and thus conſidered, it has a great propriety to the female ſex. For devotion is a tender plant, that will

will ſcarce root in ſtiff or rocky ground, but requires a ſupple gentle ſoil; and, therefore, the feminine ſoftneſs and pliableneſs, is very apt and proper for it. And accordingly there have been very eminent growths of it in that ſex. I need not heap up examples of former ages, but rather perſuade this, to leave ſome at leaſt to the following, and the more conſiderable the perſons are, the more conſpicuous will be the example, which ſeems the more to adapt it to thoſe I now ſpeak to. Devotion in a cloiſter is as recluſe as the votary, a light rather under a buſhel than on a candleſtick: and in an obſcure cottage, it is either not obſerved, or elſe thought to be but the effect of deſtitution and ſecular wants, a reſerve rather than a choice: but when thoſe who are in the eye of the world, the moſt eminent actors on the theatre of human life, ſhall chooſe the part of a ſaint, when thoſe who want none of the divertiſements or blandiſhments of earth, ſhall have their converſation in heaven, this recommends it to the ſpectators, as the true and greateſt object of human choice; ſince it is choſen by thoſe who know the utmoſt pretence of all its competitors.

29. Nor is devotion only more excellent in them in regard of its effects; but it is alſo

more neceſſary in reſpect of their obligation. Devotion is an abſtraction from the world, and, therefore, cannot in any eminent degree be practiſed by thoſe whoſe neceſſities or buſineſs do much entangle them in it. So that from ſuch, a far leſs proportion will be accepted, than from thoſe, whoſe plenty and eaſe give them no other want but that of employment. And certainly if there be any, of whom that can truly be ſaid, *Women of Quality* are the perſons; for they, in this reſpect, exceed even men of the like rank: for the men are often engaged in public employments, and muſt lend moſt of their time to the uſe of others; or, however, all have the care of their own private affairs, the management of their fortunes to employ them. But of women, the utmoſt that is ordinarily required, is but a little eaſy inſpection within their own walls, the over ſight of a few children and ſervants, and even from this, how many are by their condition of life exempted? And how many more do by their niceneſs and delicacy exempt themſelves? And, ſurely, ſo perfect a vacancy is neither happy nor ſafe. And therefore God, who projects we ſhould be both, never deſigned it for any of mankind: but where he gives ſo much

much liberty from ſecular, he expects a greater diligence in ſpiritual employments.

30. And, indeed, it is an amazing thing to ſee, that any into whom he has breathed the breath of life, on whom he hath ſtamped the image of his own eternity, can think thoſe immortal ſouls were given them only to ſerve the mean and abject uſes of their corruptible bodies, for which the ſoul of the dulleſt animal would have done as well; that eating and drinking, ſleep and recreations, which are only uſeful to the ſupporting us in this world, are the only things for which we were ſent hither. And yet if we may meaſure their opinions by their practice, this ſeems to be the perſuaſion of many of our female gentry, who look upon it as a degrading, a kind of attainder of their blood, to do any thing but pleaſe their ſenſes. An error ſure of the moſt pernicious conſequence imaginable. We know a *lady of pleaſure* is in one ſenſe a very ſcandalous epithet, and truly it is no very laudable one in the other; nay, which is worſe, they are often co-incident, and fall in with each other. She, whoſe ſole univerſal aim is pleaſure, will not think herſelf much out of the road, in the purſuit of any particular. And ſhe that thinks ſhe lives for no other purpoſe, will ſo often be

at a loſs for innocent pleaſure, that ſhe is almoſt under a neceſſity to call in the guilty, to ſerve the very end, as ſhe ſuppoſes, of her being. But, indeed, were they ſure to confine themſelves to ſuch as are harmleſs in their kind, yet the exceſs of them renders them ſinful, and the doting purſuit denominates them *lovers of pleaſures more than lovers of God*, a character ſo black, that the apoſtle completes his catalogue of the worſt of vices of the worſt of times with it, 1 *Tim.* 3. 4.

31. It is, therefore, the great goodneſs of God to deſign a reſcue for thoſe whoſe condition expoſes them to that danger, and by exacting a liberal expence of time in their devotion, divert them from laviſhing both it and their ſouls together. Neither does he by this defeat their aim of a pleaſant life, but rather aſſiſt it: for, whereas ſenſual delights are vagrant, and muſt be chaced through a hundred turnings and wild mazes; the ſpiritual are fixed, and one may always know where to find them. How often are the voluptuous in pain to know which pleaſure to chooſe? like a ſurfeited ſtomach, the greater variety is ſet before it, the more it nauſeates all. What difficulties hath a lady many times to reſolve, whether an afternoon ſhall be ſpent at court, or at the theatre? whether

ther at dancing, or at cards, in giving or receiving visits, as not knowing which will best please her? But she that knows the delights of devotion, knows withal that there is no other fit to come in competition with it; and so is not distracted in her choice, nor needs go farther than her closet for the most agreeable entertainment. I know this will sound a little incredible to those that know no other use of closets, than as a conservatory of gauds and baubles; that aspire to no pleasure there above that of children, the playing with pictures and puppets that adorn it. Nor, indeed, do I pretend, that such shall find those satisfactions I speak of. Those, whose errand is to *Beelzebub*, the God of flies, must not expect to be treated by the God of *Israel*. An ingenuous man will scorn to obtrude himself on those who desire not his company, and sure God will not make himself more cheap. Those that will meet him in their closets, must come with that design, resort thither as to an oratory; nay, more than so, they must come frequently. Spiritual joys know not the way to a place where they are not often invited: and as men seek not for each other in places where they seldom or never come, but where they daily frequent; so God contrives, not to meet us in that place where we

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appear rarely and accidentally, but where we uſually reſort.

32. I ſhall not need to branch out devotion into the ſeveral parts, that being done already in a multitude of other treatiſes, of which, if they pleaſe to conſult any one, they cannot want a directory for their worſhip, whether private or public. Only let me obſerve the order and connexion of theſe two, that they are neither to be ſevered, nor yet to be ranged prepoſterouſly. The private muſt not juſtle out the public, for God expects his ſolemn homage: and their huddling it up in private, as it may give men ground to ſuſpect they pay none at all, ſo neither God nor man can collect any thing better from it, than that they are aſhamed of the deity they pretend to ſerve. On the other ſide, the public muſt as little ſwallow up the private, and where it does, there may be a juſt doubt of its ſincerity. Many attractives there may be to church, beſides that of piety, and indeed where that is really the motive, it teaches ſo much reverence to that awful preſence they are to approach, as not to come without ſome preparation. What ſolicitude, what critical niceneſs will a Lady have for her dreſs, when ſhe is to appear at a ſolemn meeting at court? And ſhall ſhe take

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no care how fordidly, how indecently ſhe appears when the King of Kings gives audience? Shall many hours, days, nay, perhaps weeks, be taken up in contriving for the one, and ſhall there never be a minute allotted for the other? This ſure were very unequal, and yet this is the caſe where the devotion of the cloſet does not prepare for that of the Church. If the mind be not firſt tuned there, it will be very ill qualified for that harmony of ſouls, which is the only thing God regards in our public offices. So that were there no other uſe of private devotion, but as it relates to the public, that were enough to ſpeak the neceſſity of it.

33. But indeed it is not only a needful preparative to that ſacred commerce, but to our civil. The world is but a larger ſort of peſt-houſe; in every corner of it we meet with infectious airs, and thoſe that converſe in it, had need of this antidote. How many temptations does every place, every hour, every interview, preſent to the ſhocking even of that moral integrity, which a ſober heathen would judge fit to preſerve, much more of that ſtrict piety our chriſtianity exacts.

34. It was the obſervation that *Origen* made of himſelf, that the day in which he ſo ſhamefully fell, by ſacrificing to idols, he had ventured

tured out in the morning before he had completed his uſual prayers. The Devil finding him ſo unarmed, took advantage to aſſault him, as knowing he had then but a ſingle impotent man to wreſtle with, who had forfeited, by not invoking, the protection of God. And, indeed, ſince prayer is the moſt powerful exorciſm to eject him, we may well conclude, the omiſſion of it is a likely means to invite him: for if God have not the prepoſſeſſion, if we do not by hearty prayer ſurrender our ſouls to him in the morning, they are then all the day after, like that empty houſe mentioned in the goſpel, a fit receptacle for as many evil ſpirits as pleaſe to inhabit there. Nor are theſe ſpiritual the only dangers that attend us, we are liable to a multitude of ſecular ones alſo: our perſons, our fortunes, our reputations, every thing wherein we can receive a benefit, renders us equally capable of a prejudice. What multitudes of accidents are there to which we lie open, and nothing to guard us from them but the Divine Providence? which, if we neglect to ſolicit, we are ſure very unworthy of its defence. And this is a conſideration that methinks ſhould bring even the moſt ſenſual perſons upon their knees: for, though too many may be found that deſpiſe the former danger, and can contentedly enough expoſe their ſouls, yet

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ſuch are uſually the moſt tender of their temporal concerns, it being commonly the exceſſive love of thoſe which makes them neglect the other. She that fears not the fall into ſin, will yet fear the tumbling into a precipice, and though ſhe cares not for the ſpotting of her innocence, would be very loth any accident ſhould blemiſh her face, diſparage her fame, or impoveriſh her fortune; and yet from any or all of theſe, ſhe is utterly unable to guard herſelf. So that if piety will not, yet intereſt methinks ſhould render her an homager to that omnipotent power, from whence alone ſhe can derive her ſafety.

35. And now methinks a duty that is thus bound on with the cords of a man, with human as well as divine perſuaſives, ſhould not eaſily be ſhaken off. I wiſh I could ſay it never is, but I fear there are ſome of thoſe I now ſpeak to, who neglect it in ſpite of all theſe inducements; who though they can pretend nothing ſerious enough, to own the name of buſineſs, do yet ſuffer a ſucceſſion of I know not what impertinences, to divert them. And indeed, were the expence of ſome ladies days calculated, we ſhould find every hour ſo full of emptineſs, ſo over-laden with vanities, that

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it is ſcarce imaginable, where an office of devotion ſhould croud in.

36. The morning is divided between ſleep and dreſſing; nor would the morning ſuffice, but that they are fain to make a new computation to meaſure it, not by the ſun, but by their time of dining, which is often as late as the ſtationary hours of the primitive faſts, though upon a far differing motive. The afternoons being by this means reduced, are too ſhort for thoſe many divertiſements that await them, and muſt therefore borrow as much of the night as they lent to the morning. And when the mere fatigue of pleaſure ſends a lady to her reſt, it is not imaginable that ſhe will permit devotion to induce a yet greater and more diſagreeable laſſitude; ſo the whole round of her time ſeems to be a kind of magic circle, wherein nothing that is holy muſt appear. And indeed, it is one of the higheſt ſtratagems of *Satan*, thus to foreſtall their time; and by a perpetual ſupply of diverſions, inſenſibly ſteal from them the opportunities of divine offices; an artifice by which I preſume he prevails on ſome, who would ſtartle at his groſſer and more apparent temptations.

37. Nor needs he more than the ſucceſs of this project; for if this habitual neglect of pie-

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ty ſhould not finally end in great and criminal commiſſions, (as it is naturally very apt to do) yet his intereſt is ſufficiently cured by ſuch a cuſtomary omiſſion, which amounts to no leſs than the living *without God in the world:* a ſtate ſo hopeleſs, that when the Apoſtle recollects to the *Epheſians* the wretchedneſs of their *Gentile* ſtate, he does it in thoſe very words, *Eph.* 2. 12. And ſure, thoſe that live ſo under chriſtianity, are not in a better, but worſe condition, by how much the contempt of God is more unpardonable than ignorance.

38. It therefore infinitely concerns thoſe who are in danger of ſo fatal a ſnare, to look about them, and endeavour to countermine *Satan*, and be as induſtrious to ſecure their duty, as he is to ſupplant it; and to this purpoſe, one of the uſefulleſt expedients I know, is to be afore-hand with him; I mean, to make their devotions the firſt buſineſs of the day; by which I intend, not only thoſe ejaculations wherewith we all ſhould open our eyes, but their moſt ſet and ſolemn prayers; a practice ſo highly expedient to the perſons fore-mentioned, that it falls little ſhort of neceſſary; and that upon ſeveral reaſons.

39. Firſt, in relation to one of the great ends of morning prayer, which is to ſupplicate the

the guidance and protection of God for the whole day. Now if this be not done, till ſome ladies dreſſings be finiſhed, it will be half a mockery, a moſt prepoſterous requeſt, as to the greateſt part of the day, which will be paſt before; and beſides the abſurdity, there is danger in it; for all the preceding time is as it were outlawed by it, put from under the divine protection. Alas, are God's ſafeguards to be only meridional, to ſhine out only with the noon-day ſun? Do they ſuppoſe *Satan* keeps his hours, and ſtirs not abroad till the afternoon, that there is no danger either of corporal or ſpiritual miſchiefs, before that time of the day? Certainly, if *the noiſe of the harp and the viol*, which *Iſaiah* mentions, *chap.* 5. 12. do not drown it, they may often hear a morning as well as evening paſſing-bell. With how many others does the glaſs of life run out, whilſt they are at their looking-glaſſes? How many bodies are maimed and wounded in the time they are trimming and decking theirs? And *who made them differ from others*, 1 *Cor.* 4. 7. Or what tenure have they in the ſafety of one moment, ſave what they owe to God's Providence? And what rational expectation can they have of that, when they do not invoke it?

40. Nor

40. Nor are the ſpiritual dangers leſs, but rather much more; and they muſt be very ſlight obſervers of themſelves, if they do not diſcern that ſnares may be laid for them in their receſſes in their chambers, as well as in places of the moſt public reſort. Indeed, were there no other than what relates to their dreſs, and curioſity thereof, it were enough to evidence their danger, ſcarce any part of that but carrying a temptation in it: to pride, if it hit right, and pleaſe their fancy: to anger and vexation, if it do not. They had need, therefore, to put on their armour before their ornaments, by a prepoſſeſſion of prayer and meditation, to ſecure their vitals, leſt, by an internal death of grace, their bodies (in their utmoſt luſtre) prove but the painted ſepulchres of their ſouls.

41. In the ſecond place, this appears requiſite, in oppoſition to the indecency and incongruity of the contrary. How inverted an eſtimate do they make of things that poſtpone the intereſt of their ſouls, to the meaneſt member of their bodies, pay a ſupererogating attendance to the one, before the other comes at all into their care. But, what is yet worſe, how vile a contumely is offered to the Majeſty of God, who is uſed as they do their dunning creditors, poſted off with an excuſe of

no leiſure yet to ſpeak with him; whilſt, in the mean time, all the factors for their vanity can have ready acceſs and full audience. God muſt wait till their taylor, their ſhoe-maker, pleaſe to diſmiſs them, and, at the beſt, can be allowed only to bring up the rear of a whole ſhoal of artificers.

42. But thirdly, it is very doubtful whether he ſhall obtain ſo much from them; for it may often happen, that he ſhall be quite precluded, ſo numerous are the parts of a modiſh equipage, and ſo exact a ſymmetry is required in the whole, that it is the buſineſs of many hours to complete it. When, as it was ſaid of the Roman ladies, a council muſt be called about the placing of an hair that ſits irregularly, when one thing after another ſhall be tried, and again rejected, as not exact, or not becoming, time all the while inſenſibly ſteals away, and, though that will not ſtay for them, yet dinner doth, and then their bellies begin to murmur, to pay any longer attendance on their backs, and claim the next turn; and between theſe two competitors, it is odds devotion will be quite excluded, or reduced only to a grace before meat: and well if that, conſidering how unfaſhionable even this is grown. In the mean time, what a wretched improvidence is it, to reduce the

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one neceſſary buſineſs of the day to ſuch uncertainties, nay, almoſt to a certain diſappointment?

43. Yet ſuppoſe this hazard were only imaginary, and a lady were infallibly ſure not to loſe the time for her prayers, yet in the fourth place, ſhe will be likely, by ſuch preceding diverſions, to loſe much of her zeal in them, ſo that, if they be ſaid at all, they will ſcarce be ſaid in a due manner. There is, alas! ſuch a repugnancy in our nature, to any thing ſpiritual, that we cannot cloſe therewith in an inſtant; but as a benumbed frozen body will need ſome rubbing and chafing, before it can be fit for motion, ſo our more frozen ſouls require ſome previous incitation, before they can with any vigour exert themſelves in devotion. Now, ſure, the dreſſing time, (I mean ſuch a dreſſing as we now ſuppoſe) is not very proper for ſuch preparations. It is, on the contrary, extremely apt to indiſpoſe and unfit them; for when the fancy is poſſeſſed with ſo many little images of vanity, they will not eaſily be ejected. That ranging faculty is, God knows, too apt to bring in even the remoteſt diverſions; but when it has ſuch a ſtock ready at hand, how will it pour them in upon the mind, to the great allaying, if not utter extinguiſhing of devotion?

44. When all theſe conſiderations are put together, it will ſure appear wholeſome counſel, that ſuch perſons ſhould not truſt ſo important a duty to ſo many caſualties; but in the firſt place ſecure a time for that, repair to their oratory before their dreſſing-room, and, by an early conſecration of themſelves to God, defeat *Satan*'s claim, and diſcourage his attempts for the reſt of the day. We know there is a natural efficacy in a good beginning, towards the producing of a good ending: but in ſpiritual things, the influence is yet greater, becauſe it draws in auxiliaries from above, and engages the yet farther aſſiſtances of grace. Upon which account I am apt to believe, that where this duty is ſincerely and fervently performed in the morning, it will not totally be neglected in the ſucceeding parts of the day. It will be eaſy to diſcern the ſame obligation, the ſame advantage of cloſing the day with God, that there was to begin it; and when thoſe two boundaries are ſecured, when thoſe are looked upon as ſtrict duty, and conſtantly obſerved; it is not unlikely but their piety may grow generous, and with *David*, *Pſal.* 55. 17. add to the *evening and morning a noon-day office*; for where devotion is real, it is apt to be progreſſive; and the more we converſe

verſe with God, the more we ſhall deſire to do ſo. Thus we ſee how this little cloud, like that of *Elijah*, 1 *Kings* 18. 44. may *overſpread the Heavens*; and this handful of firſt-fruits may hallow the whole day.

45. Nay, indeed, when it has advanced thus far, it will probably go farther: it will not keep itſelf only on the defenſive part, but invade its oppoſites, get daily ground of thoſe vanities, by which it was before oppreſſed. For when a lady has in her cloſet waſhed her cheeks with penitential tears, ſhe cannot, ſure, when ſhe comes out, think them prepared for the varniſh of the paint and *fucus*. When ſhe has attentively examined her conſcience, that impartial mirror, and there diſcerned all the blemiſhes of her nobler part, ſhe will, ſure, with ſomewhat a more cold concern, conſult her looking-glaſs. And when ſhe has, by pious vows and reſolutions, *put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, *Rom.* 13. 14. it will be impoſſible for her to be very anxiouſly careful about her garments. This devout temper of her mind, will, by a holy *leger-de-main*, ſhuffle the romances out of her hand, and ſubſtitute the oracles of truth; will not let her dream away her time in phantaſtic ſcenes, and elaborate nothing; but prompt her *to give all diligence to make her calling and elec-*

tion ſure. In a word, when ſhe once underſtands what it is to ſpend one hour devoutly, ſhe will endeavour to reſcue all the reſt from trifles and impertinent entertainments; and employ them to purpoſes more worthy the great end of her being. Thus may ſhe almoſt inſenſibly wind herſelf out of the ſnare, diſentangle herſelf from thoſe temptations wherewith ſhe was enwrapt; and, by having *her heart ſo ſet at liberty, may run the ways of God's Commandments.* Pſal. 119.

46. But private devotion, though of excellent effect, cannot commute for the omiſſion of public; nor indeed can it long maintain its vigour, unleſs ſometimes cheriſhed by the warmth of chriſtian aſſemblies; and if God pleaſe to viſit them in their cloſets, they are even by their own laws of civility, obliged to return his viſits, and attend him in his houſe. I fear too many adapt the inſtance in the formality too, and come as unconcernedly to him as they do to one another. It is true, thoſe that pay him a cordial reverence at home, will certainly do it in the church, and therefore, by the little we ſee performed by ſome there, we may doubt God ſees as little in their retirements. But what ſpeak I of an hearty reverence, when it is viſible that there are thoſe that pay none at all? How rare a ſight is it for ſome ladies to appear at church? How

How many times (I had almoſt ſaid hundreds) do we ſee their coaches ſtand at the play-houſe, for once at God's? They ſeem to own no diſtinction of days, unleſs it be, that Sunday is their moſt vacant ſeaſon to take phyſick, or to lie a-bed; and if ſuch do ever come to church, devotion is like to be the leaſt part of their errand; ſome new garment perhaps or dreſs is to be ſhewed, and that thought the place where the moſt critical judges of thoſe things will be moſt at leiſure to obſerve them; or if they come not to teach new faſhions, it may be they come to learn, and ſuch documents will be ſurer to be put in practice, than any in the ſermon. Poſſibly they expect to ſee ſome friend or acquaintance there, and as if Chriſt were to be ſerved (as he was born) in an inn, make his houſe the common rendezvous, in which to meet their aſſociates. If they have any more ingenuous attractives, it is commonly that of curioſity, to hear ſome new celebrated preacher, and that rather for his rhetoric than his divinity; and this motive (though the beſt of the ſet) is but like that which prevailed with thoſe *Jews* St. *John* mentions, who came to *Jeſus that they might ſee Lazarus*, John 12.

47. I ſhall not rank among theſe motives, that of hypocriſy and ſeeming holineſs, for

from that, all the reſt do acquit them. Indeed, it is the only ſin which this age has ſeemed to reform, and that too only by way of *Antiperiſtaſis*, not by the virtue, but the iniquity of the times. Religion is grown ſo unfaſhionable, ſo contemptible, that none can now be tempted to put on ſo ridiculous a diſguiſe. And although as to ſingle perſons, I confeſs hypocriſy one of the deepeſt guilts, ſuch as has a peculiar portion aſſigned it by Chriſt in the place of torment, *Matth.* 24. 51. yet as to communities, I cannot but think it better to have a face of religion than profaneneſs. The example of the former may work beyond itſelf, and the form of godlineſs in ſome, may produce the power of it in others; but a pattern of profaneneſs, the farther it operates, the worſe, and all the progreſs it can make, is from one wickedneſs to another: ſo that I fear, as St. *Bernard* wiſhed for his fever again, ſo the church may ere long for her hypocrites.

48. But to recall myſelf from this digreſſion, let us a little enquire how thoſe, whom the fore-mentioned motives bring to church, behave themſelves there; and that is indeed with great conformity to the ends of their coming. Their errand is not to be ſuppliants, neither

neither do they put themſelves in a poſture: kneeling is impertinent for them who mean not to pray; but as the Apoſtle deſcribes the idolatrous ſervice of the *Iſraelites*, *They ſate down to eat and drink, and roſe up to play*, ſo theſe ſit down to talk and laugh with their pew-fellows, and riſe up to gape and look about them. When they ſhould be confeſſing their ſins to Almighty God, they are apologizing (perhaps) to one another, for the omiſſion of a ceremonious viſit, or ſome other breach of civility; when they ſhould be *obſerving the goings of God in the Sanctuary*, Pſalm 68. they are inquiring when this lady came to town, or when that goes out; nay, perhaps, the theatre is brought into the temple, the laſt play they ſaw is recollected, and quotations enough brought thence to vie with the preacher. It is impoſſible to reckon up all their topics of diſcourſe, nay, it were ſcandalous for one that reproves them to pretend to know, by how many impertinences (to ſay no worſe) they profane that holy place and time.

49. But that all-ſeeing eye, in whoſe preſence they are, keeps an exact account, and will charge them, not only with the principal, but the product; not only with their own irreverences, but with thoſe which by their example

ample or encouragement, they have occaſioned in others; nay, farther, even with that ſcandal that redounds to Chriſtianity by it. For when one that is to chooſe a religion, ſhall read the precepts of *Pythagoras*, enjoining, that the gods muſt not be worſhipped in paſſing by, as it were accidentally, but with the greateſt ſolemnity and intention; when they ſhall conſider the care of *Numa* in inſtituting officers, who at ſacrifices, and all divine ſervices, ſhould call upon the people to keep ſilence, and advert to devotion; or but the practice of the preſent *Mahometans*, who permit none to ſit in their *Moſques*, nor to pray without proſtration: when, I ſay, this is conſidered, and compared with the ſcandalous indecency obſervable in our churches, he will certainly exclude chriſtianity from all competition in his choice; nor allow that the name of a religion, whoſe very worſhip appears ſo profane, and whoſe votaries mock the God they pretend to ſerve.

50. Yet how ſevere ſoever the charge may lie againſt ſome, I am far from including all under it. I know there are many ladies whoſe examples are reproaches to the other ſex, that help to fill our congregations, when gentlemen deſert them, and to whom ſometimes we alone owe, that our churches are not furniſhed like

like the feaſt in the parable, *Luke* 14. 21. merely out of *highways and hedges, with the poor and the maimed, the halt and the blind*; yet ſome even of theſe may be liable to ſome irregularity, which may be the effect of inadvertency or miſ-perſuaſion, though not of contempt or profaneneſs.

51. And firſt, it is obſervable in ſome who come conſtantly, that yet they come not early, ſo that a conſiderable part of prayers is paſt ere they enter the church. This firſt cauſes ſome diſturbance to others, the ſucceſſive entry of new comers keeping the congregation in a continual motion and agitation, which, how unagreeable it is to devotion, *Numa*, a heathen prince, may teach us, who, as *Plutarch* tells us, took a particular care, that in the time of divine worſhip, no knocking, clapping, or other noiſe ſhould be heard; as well knowing how much the operations of the intellect are obſtructed by any thing that importunes the ſenſes. What would he have ſaid, ſhould he have come into one of our city-congregations, where often during the whole time of prayer, the clapping of pew-doors does out-noiſe the reader?

52. But beſides the indecency of the thing, and the interruption it gives to others, it is very

very injurious to themſelves; a kind of partial excommunication of their own inflicting, which excludes them from a part of the divine offices, and from that part too which is of the moſt univerſal concern, I mean the confeſſion of ſins, which the wiſdom of our church has fitly placed in the beginning of her ſervice, as the neceſſary introduction to all the reſt. For, conſidering how obnoxious we are all to the wrath and vengeance of God, our firſt buſineſs is to deprecate that, by an humble confeſſion of our guilt. Would any malefactor that had forfeited his life to juſtice, come boldly to his prince, and without taking notice of his crimes, importune him to beſtow the greateſt favours and dignities upon him? Yet it is the very ſame abrupt impudence in us, to ſupplicate the Divine Majeſty, before we attempt to atone him; to aſk good things from him, before we have acknowledged the ill we have done againſt him. And to ſuch, God may juſtly make ſuch a return as *Auguſtus* did to one that had entertained him much below his greatneſs: I knew not before that we were ſuch familiars.

53. It will much better become them to anticipate the time, *to wait at the poſts of his doors*, *Prov.* 8. 34. and contrive to be there before

before the ſervice begins, that ſo by previous recollection, they may put their minds in a fit poſture of addreſs at the public audience. This (by the way) ſpeaks it to be no very laudable cuſtom, which almoſt univerſally prevails, that thoſe few who do come early, ſpend the interval before ſervice in talking with one another, by which they do not only loſe the advantage of that time for preparation, but convert it into the quite contrary, and do thereby actually unfit and indiſpoſe themſelves. God knows, our hearts, even in the moſt compoſed temper, are too apt to create diverſions; we need not ſtart game for them to chaſe, and by prefacing our prayers with ſecular diſcourſe, make a gap for the ſame thoughts to return upon us in them. Beſides, in relation to the place, it has a ſpice of profaneneſs, it is the bringing the *Moabite* and the *Ammonite* into the temple, *Deut.* 23. 3. a kind of invaſion on God's property, by introducing our worldly concerns, as divertiſements, into the houſe which is called by his name, ſolemnly dedicated to him, and therefore dedicated that it might be his peculiar. So that with a little variation, we may to ſuch apply the expoſtulatory reproof of the apoſtle to the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. 11. 12. *What, have ye not houſes*

houſes to talk *and* converſe *in, or deſpiſe ye the Church of God?* But this is, I confeſs, a reproof that will not reach to many, there being ſo few of the better ſort that come early enough to talk before ſervice; and as for thoſe who talk at it, we have already ranked them under another *claſs*. Yet give me leave to add, that thoſe fall not much ſhort of that degree of profaneneſs, who come late, only becauſe they are loth to riſe, or to abate any thing of the curioſity of their dreſs. For ſhe that prefers her ſloth or her vanity before God's ſervice, is like, how decently ſoever ſhe behave herſelf, to give but an inſignificant attendance at it.

54. But I gueſs this may in many proceed from another cauſe, which though leſs in their intention, is not ſo in reſpect either of its unreaſonableneſs, or its effects; and that is an unequal eſtimate they make of the parts of God's ſervice. This laſt age has brought in ſuch a partiality for preaching, that prayer ſeems comparatively (like *Sarah* to *Hagar*) deſpicable in their eyes: ſo that if they can but come time enough to the ſermon, they think they have diſcharged their weightier part of the law, and of their own duty. This miſperſuaſion, though it have too generally diffuſed itſelf through both

both ſexes, yet it ſeems to have been very eſpecially imbibed by the female. And beſides the evidence that Sunday gives, the week-days afford no leſs. Let there be a lecture, though at the remoteſt part of the town, what hurrying is there to it: but let the bell toll never ſo loud for the canonical hours of common-prayer, it will not call the neareſt of the neighbourhood. I ſpeak not of thoſe who are at defiance with our ſervice, and have liſted themſelves in ſeparate congregations; (for I intend not to trace them through their wild mazes) but of thoſe who yet own our church, and object not to its offices, but only have ſuffered their value for them to be inſenſibly undermined by their greater zeal for preaching. God ſure intends an harmony in all ſacred ordinances, and would not have them ſet up a party againſt each other, but mutually aſſiſt each other's operation upon us. Thus prayer diſpoſes us to receive benefit by preaching, and preaching teaches us how to pray aright; and God grant we may long enjoy the public opportunities of both. Yet ſince this age has brought them to a competition, I muſt take leave to ſay, that if we come impartially to weigh prayer and preaching, the balance will incline another way than it ſeems with many to do, and we

ſhall

ſhall find prayer the moſt eſſential part of religion.

55. The end of preaching is two-fold, either to teach us what we know not, or to excite us to practiſe what we already know: now in relation to the firſt of theſe ends, I ſuppoſe there is a wide difference between preaching at the firſt promulgation of the goſpel, and now. It was then the only way of revealing to the world the whole myſtery of our ſalvation; ſo that the apoſtles inference was then irrefragable, *How ſhall they believe on him of whom they have not heard, and how ſhall they hear without a preacher?* Rom. 10. 14. But where chriſtianity is planted, and the New Teſtament received, we have therein the whole doctrine of Chriſt; nay, we have not only the matter, but the very form of thoſe ſermons which Chriſt and his apoſtles preached; ſo that unleſs we think them not ſufficiently gifted, we cannot but acknowledge we have in them ample inſtruction both for faith and manners; enough, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, *to make us wiſe unto ſalvation*, 2 Tim. 3. 15. And the reading of thoſe being a conſiderable part of our church's ſervice, we have the moſt genuine preaching, even before the miniſter aſcends the pulpit. Beſides, for the help of thoſe whoſe youth

youth or incapacity diſables them from making collections thence for themſelves, our church has epitomized the moſt neceſſary points of belief and practice in the catechiſm, not (as the Roman) to preclude their farther ſearch, but to ſupply them in the interim till they are qualified for it; and by that early infuſion of chriſtian principles, to ſecure them of that knowledge which is ſimply neceſſary to their ſalvation.

56. Now ſure, to people in this ſtate, preaching is not of ſo abſolute neceſſity in reſpect of inſtruction, as it was for thoſe who from heatheniſm and idolatry were to be brought firſt to the knowledge, and then to the faith of Chriſt. We ſeem therefore now more generally concerned in the other end of preaching, the exciting us to practice; for alas! there are few of us who ſtumble on ſin for want of light; but either through heedleſſneſs, and want of looking before us, or elſe by a wilful proſtration of ourſelves to it; ſo that we often need to be rouſed out of our negligence, to be frighted out of our ſtubbornneſs, and by a cloſe application of thoſe truths we either forget, or ſuppreſs, be animated to our duty. And for this purpoſe preaching is doubtleſs of excellent uſe; and the nauſeating of it, ſhews a very

ſick conſtitution of mind; yet ſure the over-greedy deſire may be a diſeaſe alſo. He that eats more then he can concoct, does not ſo much aſſiſt as oppreſs nature; and thoſe that run from ſermon to ſermon, that allow themſelves no time to chew, much leſs to digeſt what they hear, will ſooner confound their brains, than better their lives. Nay, it oft betrays them to a very pernicious deluſion; it diverts them from many of the practical parts of piety, and yet gives them a confidence that they are extraordinarily pious; and by their belief, that religion conſiſts principally in hearing, makes them forget to try themſelves by that more infallible teſt of doing God's will. So that whereas God never deſigned preaching for more than a guide in their way, they make it their way and their end too; and hearing muſt, like a circle, begin and terminate in itſelf.

57. I am ſure in ſecular concerns, we ſhould think him a very unprofitable ſervant, that after his Lord had given him directions what to do, ſhould be ſo tranſported with hearing his inſtructions, that he ſhould deſire to have it infinitely repeated, and ſo ſpend the time wherein he ſhould do the work. And we have reaſon to think God will make the ſame judgment of thoſe who do the like in his ſervice.

58. One

58. One would now think that this ravenous appetite of hearing ſhould ſuperſede all niceneſs in it; yet we find it does not, but that ſome make a ſhift to be at once voracious and ſqueamiſh. If this ſpiritual food be not artificially dreſſed, it is too groſs for their palates: the phraſe muſt be elegant, the words well accented, and the *enticing words of man's wiſdom*, which St. *Paul* diſclaims in his preaching, 1 *Cor.* 2. 4. is that which they principally regard. Nay, the memory of the preacher becomes the moſt material point of his ſermon, and the firſt glance on his book prejudices him. I need not add the extravagances of an uncouth tone, a furious vehemence, or fantaſtic geſture, wherein the ſoul and vital efficacy of preaching has been ſolemnly placed. Now it is evident, all theſe are but trivial accompliſhments; ſo that thoſe who inſiſt ſo much on them, do make preaching much leſs ſacred and divine than indeed it is; and therefore cannot without abſurdity, lay the main ſtreſs of religion upon it, or make that the higheſt of God's ordinances, which owes all its gratefulneſs with them to the endowments of men. Some may think I purſue this ſubject too far, but I am ſure I do it not with deſign to derogate from the juſt reſpect due to preaching; only I would not have

it monopolize our eſteem; or juſtle out another duty, which is of more conſtant uſe, and indiſpenſable neceſſity.

59. And ſuch certainly is prayer, that reſpiration of the ſoul, which is ſo neceſſary, that it admits not of long intermiſſion, and therefore ſeems to carry the ſame proportion to hearing, which breathing does to eating: we may make long intervals of feeding, and yet ſubſiſt; but if we ſhould do ſo in breathing, we cannot recover it. Prayer is like the morning and evening ſacrifice under the law, which God ordained ſhould be perpetual; whereas preaching is but like the readings in the ſynagogues on the ſabbaths and feſtivals. Indeed, however we have confounded the terms, it is prayer only that can properly be called the worſhip of God; it is that by which we pay him his ſolemn homage, acknowledging his ſovereignty, and our own dependance. When we hear, we do no more than what every diſciple does to his maſter; but when we pray, we own him as the ſpring and ſource of all the good we expect, as the author of our being, and the object of our adoration: in a word, we do by it profeſs him our God; it being an impreſs of mere natural religion, to ſupplicate the Deity we acknowledge.

60. And

60. And as by prayer we tender the greateſt honour to God, ſo likewiſe do we procure the greateſt advantages to ourſelves. Prayer is the powerful engine, by which we draw down bleſſings; it is the key which lets us into the immenſe ſtore-houſe of the Almighty; nay, it is that upon which the efficacy of preaching depends. The word is but a dead letter without the ſpirit; and God has promiſed the ſpirit to none but thoſe that aſk it, *Luke*, 11. 13. So that prayer is that which enlivens and inſpirits our moſt ſacred actions: and, accordingly in ſcripture we find it ſtill a concomitant in all eccleſiaſtical concerns. When an apoſtle was to be ſubſtituted in the room of *Judas*, we find they referred it not to the deciſion of lots, till God, who had the ſole diſpoſing of them, *Prov.* 16. 33. had been invoked by ſolemn prayer, *Acts* 1. 24. So when *Barnabas* and *Saul* were to be ſeparated to the miniſtry, though the appointment was by the Holy Ghoſt, yet that ſuperſeded not the neceſſity of prayer; the apoſtles prayed (yea, and faſted too) before they laid hands on them, *Acts* 13. 3. Nay, our bleſſed Saviour himſelf, though he knew what was in man, and needed no guidance, but his own omniſcience in his choice; yet we find that before his election of the twelve

apoſtles, he continued a whole night in prayer to God, *Luke* 16. 12. doubtleſs, to teach us how requiſite prayer is in all our important intereſts, which, like the pillar of cloud and fire to the *Iſraelites*, is our beſt convoy through the wilderneſs, through all the ſnares and temptations, through all the calamities and diſtreſſes of this world, and our moſt infallible guide to the land of promiſe.

61. And ſure, when all theſe are the properties of prayer, though private, they will not leſs belong to the public. Such a conſpiration and union of importunate devotion, muſt have a proportionable increaſe in its effect: and if Heaven can ſuffer violence by the fervour of one ſingle votary, with what ſtorms, what batteries will it be ſcaled by a numerous congregation? We find the church is by Chriſt compared to an *army with banners*, Cant. ch. 9, 3. but ſure never is this army in ſo good array, in ſo invincible a poſture, as upon its knees. The eccleſiaſtical ſtory tells us of a legion of chriſtians in *Aurelius*'s camp, who in that poſture diſcomfited two aſſailants at once, the enemy and the drought; that breath which they ſent up in prayers, like a kindly exhalation returned in rain, and relieved the periſhing army: and had we but the ſame fervour,

fervour, and the ſame innocency, could we lift up but as pure hands as they did, there would be no bleſſing beyond our reach. But the leſs any of us find ourſelves ſo qualified, the more need we have to put ourſelves among thoſe that are.

62. There is a happy contagion in goodneſs, fed as green wood may be kindled by the neighbouring flame; ſo the example of another's zeal may quicken mine. There is certainly ſome advantage in being in ſuch company; thoſe ſhowers of benediction which their prayers bring down, are ſo plentiful, that ſome drops at leaſt may ſcatter upon thoſe about them. We find *Eliſha*, for *Jehoſhaphat*'s ſake, endured the preſence of *Jehoram*, whom otherwiſe he profeſſes he would not have looked towards, 2 *Kings*, 3. 14. and God may perhaps do the like in this caſe; and as he proſpered *Potiphar* for *Joſeph*'s ſake, *Gen.* 39. 5. ſo the piety of ſome few may redound to the benefit of all. From all theſe conſiderations, I ſuppoſe may ſufficiently be evinced the neceſſity and benefit of public prayer, and conſequently the unreaſonableneſs of thoſe, who upon any pretence neglect it. I ſhall now only beſeech thoſe to whom I ſpeak, to make the application to themſelves, and to ſhew they do ſo by their more early and more aſſiduous attendance on it.

63. There is alſo another duty to which many of thoſe to whom I write ſeem to need incitation, and that is communicating; a part of devotion which the looſer ſort ſcarce ever think in ſeaſon till their death-bed: as if that ſacrament, like the Romaniſt's extreme unction, were only fit for expiring ſouls. But to ſuch we may apply the words of the angel to the woman, *Luke* 24. 5. *Why ſeek ye the living among the dead?* Why, think ye that the ſun of righteouſneſs is only to ſhine in the ſhades of death, or that Chriſt is never to give us his fleſh, till we are putting off our own? It is one principal end of that ſacrament to engage and enable us to a new life. How prepoſterous then is it, how utterly inconſiſtent with that end to defer it to the hour of death? It is true, it is a good *Viaticum* for ſuch as are in their way towards bliſs; but it is too bold a hope, to fancy that it ſhall in an inſtant bring them into that way, who have their whole life poſted on in the contrary. The roads to Heaven and Hell lie ſure too far aſunder to be within diſtance of one ſtep; nor can it with any ſafety be preſumed, that once receiving at their death, ſhall expiate ſo many wilful neglects of it in their life.

64. But I ſhall ſuppoſe theſe total omiſſions are not a common guilt: yet with many others

others the fault differs only in degree: they do not wholly omit, but yet come ſo unfrequently, as if they thought it a very arbitrary matter whether they come or no. And this truly is obſervable in many, who ſeem to give good attendance on other parts of divine worſhip. For, indeed, it is a ſad ſpectacle to ſee, that let a church be never ſo much crowded at ſermon, it is emptied in an inſtant when the communion begins; people run as it were frighted from it, as if they thought with thoſe in *Malachi*, that *the table of the Lord is polluted*, Mal. 1. 12. that ſome peſt or infection would thence break forth upon them. A ſtrange indignity to the Majeſty, and ingratitude to the love of our Redeemer. Let a King, or but ſome great man make a public entertainment, how hard is it to keep back the preſſing multitude: many officers are neceſſary to repel un-invited gueſts: and yet here there needs more to drive us to it, though the invitation be more general, and the treat infinitely more magnificent.

65. I know this fault (like many other) ſhrouds itſelf under a fair diſguiſe to the humbleſt veneration. People ſay, it is their great reverence they have for the ſacrament, that keeps them at ſo great a diſtance: but ſure that is but a fictitious reverence which diſcards obedience:

obedience: and when Chriſt commands our coming, our drawing back looks more like ſtubbornneſs and rebellion, than awe and reſpect. I ſuppoſe we pretend not to exceed the primitive chriſtians in humility and godly fear, and yet they communicated daily: and, therefore, ſure our reverence is of a much differing make from theirs, if it produce ſuch contrary effects. Indeed, it is to be feared, that many put a great cheat upon themſelves in this matter. The Euchariſt is juſtly accounted the higheſt of divine ordinances; and thoſe who think of no preparation in other, yet have ſome general impreſſions of the neceſſity of it in this: but the uneaſineſs of the taſk diſcourages them, they dare not come without a wedding garment, and yet are loth to be at the pains to put it on: ſo that all this goodly pretext of reverence, is but the Devil in *Samuel*'s mantle, is but ſloth clad in the habit of humility.

66. And to this temptation of ſloth, there is another thing ſubſervient, and that is the eaſy and ſlight opinion which is commonly taken of ſins of omiſſion. Many are ſtartled at great commiſſions, think them to carry a face of deformity and horror, who in the mean time look on omiſſions only as privations and mere nothings, as if all the affirmative precepts

were

were only things of form, put in by God rather to try our inclinations, than to oblige our performance; and ſo were rather overtures and propoſals, which we may aſſent to or not, than injunctions, which, at our peril we muſt obey. A fancy no leſs abſurd than impious. That God ſhould be content ſo to compound with his creatures, (and like a prince over-powered by his vaſſals) conſent to remit all their homage, abſolve them from all poſitive duty, ſo they would be but ſo civil as not to fly in his face, or to commit outrage on his perſon. But this wild imagination needs no other confutation, than that form of indictment our Saviour gives us, as the model of that which ſhall be uſed at the laſt day, *Matth.* 25. where the whole proceſs lies againſt ſins of omiſſion, and yet the ſentence is as diſmal and irreverſible, as if all the commiſſions in the world had been put into the bill.

67. And certainly of all omiſſions, none is like to be more ſeverely charged than this of communicating, which is not only a diſobedience, but an unkindneſs, which ſtrikes not only at the authority, but the love of our Lord, when he ſo affects an union with us, that he creates myſteries only to effect it, when

when he deſcends even to our ſenſuality, and becauſe we want ſpiritual appetites, puts himſelf within reach of our natural; and as he once veiled his divinity in fleſh, ſo now he veils even that fleſh under the form of our corporal nouriſhment, only that he may the more indiſſolvably unite, yea, incorporate himſelf with us. When I ſay he does all this, we are not only impious, but inhuman if it will not attract us. Nay farther, when he does all this upon the moſt endearing memory of what he has before done for us, when he preſents himſelf to our embraces, in the ſame form wherein he preſented himſelf to God for our expiation, when he ſhews us thoſe wounds which our iniquities made, thoſe ſtripes by which we were healed, that death by which we were revived, ſhall we, to complete the ſcene of his paſſion, force him alſo to that pathetic complaint, *Lam.* 1. 12. *Is it nothing to you, all ye that paſs by?* Shall we, inſtead of ſmiting our breaſts (as did other witneſſes of his ſufferings) turn our backs? If we can habitually do this, it is to be feared the next degree will be to wag our heads too, and we ſhall have the profaneneſs to deride, what we have not the piety to commemorate.

68. And

68. And this ſeems to be no improbable fear: for in religion there are gradual declinations as well as advances; coldneſs and tepidity will (if not ſtopt in its progreſs,) quickly grow to lothing and contempt. And indeed to what can we more reaſonably impute the great overflowings of profaneneſs among us, than to our ill huſbanding the means of Grace? Now certainly of all thoſe means, there is none of greater energy and power than the bleſſed ſacrament.

69. Were there no other benefit derived from it, ſave that which the preparation implies, it were very conſiderable. It brings us to a recollection, fixes our indefinite purpoſes of ſearching and trying our ways, which elſe perhaps we ſhould infinitely defer; ſtops our career in ſin, and by acquainting us with our ſelves, ſhews us where our danger lies, and how we are to avert it, what breaches are made in upon our ſouls, and how we muſt repair them, all which are with many ſeldom thought of, but when the time of communicating approaches. We live ſo far off from ourſelves, know ſo little what is done in us, that we anſwer the deſcription the prophet makes of the ſurpriſe of *Babylon*, of which the king knew nothing till poſt after poſt ran to inform

form him, that his *city was taken at one end*, *Jer.* 51. 31. We often lie ſecure while the enemy is within our walls, and therefore they are friendly alarms which the Sacrament gives us to look to our defence. But if, when the trumpet ſounds, none will prepare himſelf to the battle, if, when the miniſter gives warning of a ſacrament, and the preparation it requires, we go our ways, and with *Gallio*, *care for none of thoſe things*; or with *Felix*, *Acts* 24. 26. *put it off to a convenient time*, we wilfully expoſe ourſelves, and it is but juſt, Chriſt's dreadful menace ſhould be executed upon us, that we *die in our ſins*, who will fruſtrate ſuch an opportunity of a reſcue from them.

70. But it is not only this remoter and accidental advantage (this preventing grace) which the holy euchariſt affords: it contains yet greater and more intrinſic benefits, is a ſpring of aſſiſting grace alſo. It is a magazine of ſpiritual artillery, to fortify us againſt all aſſaults of the devil, the great remedy for all the maladies of our ſouls, that which, if duly received, will qualify us to make St. *Paul*'s boaſt, *Phil.* 4. 13. *I can do all things through Chriſt which ſtrengthens me.* In a word, it is to us whatever we need, wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption, becauſe it poſſeſſes us of him who

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is ſo, 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. ſo that whenever we neglect it, we manifeſtly betray our own intereſt, and do implicitly chooſe death, whilſt we thus run from life.

71. Thus we ſee there is a concurrence of all ſorts of arguments for this duty: oh that ſome (at leaſt) of them may prevail! If we are not tractable enough to do it in obedience, yet let us be ſo ingenuous as to do it for love, for gratitude; or if for neither of theſe, let us be at leaſt ſo wiſe as to do it for intereſt and advantage. I know people are apt to pretend buſineſs, the farm and the oxen muſt excuſe their coming to the feaſt; but alas! what buſineſs can there be of equal neceſſity or advantage with this? Yet even that apology is ſuperſeded to thoſe I now ſpeak to, who, as I obſerved before, have leiſure more than enough, ſo that it would be one part of the benefit, its taking up ſome of their time: let me therefore earneſtly beſeech them not to grudge a few of their vacant hours to this ſo happy an employment.

72. Did any of their near friends and relations invite them to an interview, they would not think him too importunate, though he repeated the ſummons weekly, nay, daily; but would punctually obſerve the meeting: and

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when their Saviour ſeldomer intreats their company, ſhall he not obtain it? muſt he never ſee them but at two or three ſolemn times of the year? And ſhall they wonder at any intervening invitation (as the *Shunamite*'s husband did at her going to the prophet, when it was *neither new moon nor Sabbath*, 2 Kings, 4. 23.) and tell him it is not yet *Eaſter* or *Chriſtmas*: this were not only to be irreligious, but rude; and methinks thoſe who ſtand ſo much upon the punctilioes of civility one to another, ſhould not then only lay aſide their good manners, when they are to treat with their Redeemer. Certainly he is not ſo unpleaſant company, that they need ſhun his converſe; if he do appear ſo to any, it is that ſhunning that is the cauſe of it. He does not open his treaſure to ſtrangers: they that come now and then for form ſake, no wonder if their entertainment be as cold as their addreſs. They that would indeed *taſte how ſweet the Lord is*, *Pſalm* 34. 8. muſt, by the frequency of their coming, ſhew the heartineſs of it, and then they would indeed find it a *feaſt of fat things*, as the prophet ſpeaks.

73. In a word, let them but make experiment, reſolve for a certain time (be it a year or thereabouts) to omit no opportunity,

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(and with all no due preparation) of communicating; I am a little confident they will afterwards need no other importunity, but that of their own longings: the expiration of that definite time, will prove the beginning of that indefinite, and their reſolutions will have no other limit but their lives. For certainly there is not in all the whole myſtery of godlineſs, in all the œconomy of the Goſpel, ſo expedite, ſo infallible a means of growth in grace, as a frequent and worthy participation of this bleſſed ſacrament. I cannot therefore more pertinently cloſe this ſection, than with this exhortation to it, by which they will not only complete all their devotions, crown and hallow the reſt of their oblations to God, but they will be advanced alſo in all parts of practical piety. For though this and other ſacred offices be performed in the church, the efficacy of them is not circumſcribed within thoſe walls, but follows the devout ſoul through all the occurrences of human life.

74. She that has intently conſidered the preſence of God in the ſanctuary, has learned ſo much of his ubiquity, that ſhe will not eaſily forget it in other places, and ſhe that remembers that, will need no other guard to

ſecure her innocence, no other incentive to animate her endeavours, ſince ſhe is viewed by him who is equally powerful to puniſh or reward, who regards not the perſons of the mighty, nor can be awed into the connivance of a crime. Indeed a ſerious advertence to the divine preſence, is the moſt certain curb to all diſorderly appetites, as on the contrary, the not having God before their eyes, is in Scripture the comprehenſive deſcription of the moſt wretched profligated ſtate of ſin. It concerns therefore all thoſe who aſpire to true piety, to nouriſh that awful ſenſe of their hearts, as that which will beſt enable them to practiſe the Apoſtle's advice, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *To cleanſe themſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, and to perfect holineſs in the fear of God.*

75. I am ſenſible that this ſection is ſpun out to a length very unproportionable to the former; but as the principal wheel in an artificial movement, may be allowed a bulk ſomewhat anſwerable to its uſe, ſo upon the ſame account, the ſize of this is not unjuſtifiable: the piety which this deſigns to recommend, being the one neceſſary thing, which muſt influence all other endowments. We know

know the coarſe reſemblance *Solomon* makes of a *fair woman without diſcretion, that ſhe is like a jewel of gold in a ſwine's ſnout, Prov.* 22. 12. but even that diſcretion (if any ſuch could be) without piety, were but the adding one jewel more, expoſing another valuable thing to the ſame deſpicable ridiculous uſe. But to ſpeak truly, there is no real diſcretion, where there is no religion: and therefore *Solomon* ſeems in this place to underſtand by it that practical wiſdom, which in the ſacred dialect, (his writings eſpecially) is equivalent to the fear of the Lord. It is true, there may be a rallying wit, to ſcoff and abuſe, a ſerpentine wiſineſs, to undermine and deceive; but that ſort of wiſdom (like that of *Achithophel*) finally converts into fooliſhneſs, does very often appear to do ſo in this life, but muſt certainly in the next, becauſe it builds upon a falſe bottom, prefers temporal things before eternal. And as neither beauty nor wit, (the two celebrated accompliſhments of women) ſo will neither greatneſs nor honour give any advantage without piety, it will only (as hath been already obſerved) make them more exemplary ſinners, inflame the account, and ſo expoſe them to a greater degree of condemnation. For

ſure it is not their ſex that will reſcue them from the diſmal denunciation of the wiſe man, *Wiſd.* 6. 6. *Mighty men ſhall be mightily tormented.* I conclude all with another irrefragable maxim of the ſame author. *Whether one be rich, noble or poor, their glory is the fear of the Lord.*

THE

THE LADIES CALLING.

PART II. SECT. I.

OF VIRGINS.

1. WE have taken a view of thoſe general qualifications, which are at once the duty and the ornament of the Female Sex conſidered at large: theſe, like the common *genus*, involve all. But there are alſo ſpecific differences ariſing from the ſeveral circumſtances and ſtates of life, ſome whereof may exact greater degrees even of the former virtues, and all may have ſome diſtinct and peculiar requiſites adapted to that peculiar ſtate and condition: and theſe our propoſed method engages us now to conſider. Human life is full of viciſſitudes and changes, ſo that it is impoſſible to enumerate all the leſſer accidental alterations to

which it is liable. But the principal and moſt diſtinct ſcenes, in which a woman can be ſuppoſed regularly to be an actor, are theſe three, *Virginity*, *Marriage*, and *Widowhood:* which, as they differ widely from each other, ſo for the diſcharging of their reſpective duties, there are peculiar cautions worthy to be adverted to.

2. Virginity is firſt in order of time, and if we will take St. *Paul*'s judgment, in reſpect of excellence alſo, 1 *Cor.* 7. And indeed, ſhe that preſerves herſelf in that ſtate upon the account he mentions, *ver.* 34. that *ſhe may care for the things that are of the Lord, that ſhe may be holy both in body and in ſpirit,* deſerves a great deal of veneration, as making one of the neareſt approaches to the angelical ſtate. And accordingly, in the primitive times, ſuch a Virginity was had in a ſingular eſtimation, and by the aſſignment of the ſchool-men, hath a particular coronet of glory belonging to it. Nay, even among the heathens, a conſecrated Virgin was looked on as a thing moſt ſacred. The Roman Veſtals had extraordinary privileges allowed them by the ſtate; and they were generally held in ſuch reverence, that teſtaments, and other depoſitums of the greateſt truſt, were uſually committed to their cuſtody, as to the ſureſt and moſt inviolable ſanctuary. Nay, their preſence

was

was ſo to convicted malefactors; the magiſtrates veiling their *faces* when they appeared, and giving up the criminal to the commanding interceſſion of Virgin innocence.

3. As for the religious orders of Virgins, in the preſent Roman Church, though ſome, and thoſe very great abuſes have crept in; yet I think it were to be wiſhed, that thoſe who ſuppreſſed them in this nation, had confined themſelves within the bounds of a reformation, by choofing rather to rectify and regulate, than aboliſh them.

4. But though there be not among us ſuch ſocieties, yet there may be *Nuns* who are not profeſſed. She who has devoted her heart to God, and the better to ſecure his intereſt againſt the moſt inſinuating rival of human love, intends to admit none, and prays that ſhe may not, does by thoſe humble purpoſes conſecrate herſelf to God: and perhaps more acceptably, than if her preſumption ſhould make her more poſitive, and engage her in a vow, ſhe is not ſure to perform.

5. But this is a caſe does not much need ſtating in our clime, wherein women are ſo little tranſported with this zeal of voluntary Virginity, that there are but few can find patience for it when neceſſary. An old maid is now thought

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ſuch a curſe, as no poetic fury can exceed, looked on as the moſt calamitous creature in nature. And I ſo far yield to the opinion, as to confeſs it to thoſe who are kept in that ſtate againſt their wills; but ſure the original of that miſery is from the deſire, not the reſtraint of marriage: let them but ſuppreſs that once, and the other will never be their infelicity. But I muſt not be ſo unkind to the Sex, as to think it is always ſuch deſire that gives them an averſion to celibacy; I doubt not, many are frighted only with the vulgar contempt under which that ſtate lies; for which if there be no cure, yet there is the ſame armour againſt this, which is againſt all other cauſeleſs reproaches, *viz.* to contemn it. Yet I am a little apt to believe there may be a prevention in the caſe. If the ſuperannuated Virgins would behave themſelves with gravity and reſervedneſs, addict themſelves to the ſtricteſt virtue and piety, they would give the world ſome cauſe to believe it was not their neceſſity, but their choice which kept them unmarried; that they were pre-engaged to a better amour, eſpouſed to the Spiritual Bridegroom: and this would give them among the ſober ſort, at leaſt the reverence and eſteem of matrons. Or if, after all caution and endeavour, they chance to fall under the tongues of malicious

ſlanderers,

ſlanderers, this is no more than happens in all other inſtances of duty: and if contempt be to be avoided, Chriſtianity itſelf muſt be quitted as well as Virgin-chaſtity. But if on the other ſide, they endeavour to diſguiſe their age by all the impoſtures and gaieties of a youthful dreſs and behaviour, if they ſtill herd themſelves among the youngeſt and vaineſt company, betray a young mind in an aged body, this muſt certainly expoſe them to ſcorn and cenſure. If no play, no ball, no dancing-meeting can eſcape them, people will undoubtedly conclude, that they deſire to put off themſelves, to meet with chapmen, who ſo conſtantly keep the fairs. I wiſh therefore they would more univerſally try the former expedients, which I am confident are the beſt amulet againſt the reproach they ſo much dread, and may alſo deliver them from the danger of a more coſtly remedy; I mean that of an unequal and imprudent match, which many have ruſhed upon, as they have run frighted from the other, and ſo by an unhappy contradiction, do both ſtay long and marry haſtily, gall their necks to ſpare their ears, and run into the yoke rather than hear ſo ſlight and unreaſonable a reproach. They need not, I think, be upbraided with the folly of ſuch an election, ſince their own experience is (to many

of

of them) but too ſevere a monitor. I ſhall not inſiſt farther on this; but having given the elder Virgins that enſign of their ſeniority, as to ſtand firſt in my diſcourſe, I ſhall now addreſs more generally to the reſt.

6. And here the two grand elements eſſential to the Virgin-ſtate, are modeſty and obedience, which though neceſſary to all, yet are in a more eminent degree required here. And therefore, though I have ſpoken largely of the virtue of modeſty in the firſt part of this tract, yet it will not be impertinent to make ſome farther reflections on it, by way of application to Virgins, in whom modeſty ſhould appear in its higheſt elevation, and ſhould come up to ſhamefacedneſs. Her look, her ſpeech, her whole behaviour, ſhould own an humble diſtruſt of herſelf; ſhe is to look on herſelf but as a novice, a probationer in the world, and muſt take this time rather to learn and obſerve, than to dictate and preſcribe. Indeed, there is ſcarce any thing looks more indecent, than to ſee a young maid too forward and confident in her talk. It is the opinion of the wiſe man, *Eccl.* 32. 7. that *a young man ſhould ſcarce ſpeak, though twice aſked:* in proportion to which, it will ſure not become a young woman, whoſe ſex puts her under greater reſtraints, to be either importunate or magiſterial

rial in her diſcourſe. And though that which former ages call boldneſs, is now only aſſurance and good breeding, yet we have ſeen ſuch bad ſuperſtructures upon that foundation, as ſure will not much recommend it to any conſidering perſon.

7. But there is another breach of modeſty, as it relates to chaſtity, in which they are yet more eſpecially concerned. The very name of virgin, imports a moſt critical niceneſs in that point. Every indecent curioſity, or impure fancy, is a deflowering of the mind, and every the leaſt corruption of them, gives ſome degrees of defilement to the body too. For between the ſtate of pure immaculate virginity, and arrant proſtitution, there are many intermediate ſteps; and ſhe that makes any of them, is ſo far departed from her firſt integrity. She that liſtens to any wanton diſcourſe, has violated her ears; ſhe that ſpeaks any, her tongue; every immodeſt glance vitiates her eye, and every the lighteſt act of dalliance, leaves ſomething of ſtain and ſulliage behind it. There is therefore a moſt rigorous caution requiſite herein: for, as nothing is more clean and white than a perfect virginity, ſo every the leaſt ſpot or ſoil is the more diſcernible. Beſides, youth is for the moſt part flexible, and eaſily warps into a crookedneſs, and therefore can never ſet itſelf too far from a temptation. Our tender

tender bloſſoms we are fain to ſkreen and ſhelter, becauſe every unkindly air nips and deſtroys them, and nothing can be more nice and delicate than a maiden virtue, which ought not to be expoſed to any of thoſe malignant airs which may blaſt and corrupt it, of which God knows there are too many, ſome that blow from within, and others from without.

8. Of the firſt ſort, there is none more miſchievous than curioſity, a temptation which foiled human nature even in Paradiſe: and, therefore, ſure a feeble girl ought not to truſt herſelf with that, which ſubdued her better fortified parent. The truth is, an effect of ignorance cannot be ſo blameable in other caſes, as it is commendable in this. Indeed, it is the ſureſt and moſt invincible guard; for ſhe who is curious to know indecent things, it is odds but ſhe will too ſoon and too early buy the learning. The ſuppreſſing and deteſting all ſuch curioſities, is, therefore, that eminent fundamental piece of continence I would recommend to them, as that which will protect and ſecure all the reſt.

9. But when they have ſet this guard upon themſelves, they muſt provide againſt foreign aſſaults too; the moſt dangerous whereof I take to be ill company and idleneſs. Againſt the

firſt,

firſt, they muſt provide by a prudent choice of converſation, which ſhould generally be of their own ſex; yet, not all of that neither, but ſuch who will at leaſt entertain them innocently, if not profitably. Againſt the ſecond, they may ſecure themſelves by a conſtant ſeries of employments: I mean, not ſuch frivolous ones as are more idle than doing nothing, but ſuch as are ingenious, and ſome way worth their time: wherein as the firſt place is to be given to the offices of piety, ſo in the intervals of thoſe, there are divers others, by which they may not unuſefully fill up the vacancy of their time: ſuch are the acquiring of any of thoſe ornamental improvements which become their quality, as writing, needle-works, languages, muſic, or the like. If I ſhould here inſert the art of œconomy and houſehold management, I ſhould not, I think, affront them in it; that being the moſt proper feminine buſineſs, from which neither wealth nor greatneſs can totally abſolve them: and a little of the theory in their parents houſe, would much aſſiſt them towards the practice when they come to their own. In a word, there are many parts of knowledge uſeful for civil as well in divine life; and the improving themſelves in any of thoſe, is a rational employment.

10. But I confeſs I know not how to reduce

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to that head many of thoſe things which from divertiſements, are now ſtept up to be the ſolemn buſineſs of many young ladies, and I doubt of ſome old. Such is in the firſt place, gaming, a recreation, whoſe lawfulneſs I queſtion not, whilſt it keeps within the bounds of a recreation: but when it ſets up for a calling, I know not whence it derives its licence. And a calling ſure it ſeems to be with ſome; a laborious one too, ſuch as they toil night and day at, nay, do not allow themſelves that remiſſion which the laws both of God and man have provided for the meaneſt mechanic. The ſabbath is to them no day of reſt, but this trade goes on when all ſhops are ſhut. I know not how they ſatisfy themſelves in ſuch an habitual waſte of their time: (beſides all the incidental faults of avarice and anger) but I much doubt that plea, whatſoever it is, which paſſes with them, will ſcarce hold weight at his tribunal, who has commanded us to *redeem*, not fling away our *time*.

11. There is another thing to which ſome devote a very conſiderable part of their time, and that is the reading of *Romances*, which ſeems now to be thought the peculiar and only becoming ſtudy of young ladies. I confeſs their youth might a little adapt them to theſe when they

they were children, and I wiſh they were always in their event as harmleſs: but I fear they often leave ill impreſſions behind them. Thoſe amorous paſſions, which it is their deſign to paint to the utmoſt life, are apt to inſinuate themſelves into their unwary readers, and, by an unhappy inverſion, a copy ſhall produce an original. When a poor young creature ſhall read there of ſome triumphant beauty, that has I know not how many captived knights proſtrate at her feet, ſhe will probably be tempted to think it a fine thing; and may reflect how much ſhe loſes time, that has not yet ſubdued one heart: and then her buſineſs will be to ſpread her nets, lay her toils to catch ſomebody who will more fatally enſnare her. And when ſhe has once wound herſelf into an amour, thoſe authors are ſubtile caſuiſts for all difficult caſes that may occur in it, will inſtruct in the neceſſary artifices of deluding parents and friends, and put her ruin perfectly in her own power. And truly, this ſeems to be ſo natural a conſequence of this ſort of ſtudy, that of all the divertiſements that look ſo innocently, they can ſcarce fall upon any more hazardous. Indeed, it is very difficult to imagine what vaſt miſchief is done to the world, by the falſe notions and images of things; particularly of love and honour, thoſe nobleſt concerns

cerns of human life, repreſented in theſe mirrors. But when we conſider upon what principles the duelliſts and hectors of the age defend their outrages, and how great a devotion is paid to luſt, inſtead of virtuous love, we cannot be to ſeek for that goſpel, which makes theſe doctrines appear orthodox.

12. As for the entertainments which they find abroad, they may be innocent, or otherwiſe, according as they are managed. The common intercourſe of civility is a debt to humanity, and therefore mutual viſits may often be neceſſary; and ſo (in ſome degree) may ſeveral harmleſs and healthful recreations be which may call them abroad; for I write not now to nuns, and have no purpoſe to confine them to a cloiſter. Yet, on the other ſide, to be always wandering, is the condition of a vagabond; and of the two, it is better to be a priſoner to one's home than a ſtranger. *Solomon* links it with ſome very illaudable qualities of a woman, *Proverbs*, 7. 11. that *her feet abide not in her houſe*; and it is an unhappy impotence not to be able to ſtay at home, when there is any thing to be ſeen abroad: that any maſk or revel, any jollity of others muſt be their rack and torment, if they cannot get to it. Alas! ſuch meetings are not ſo ſure to be ſafe, that they had need

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be frequent, and they are of all others leaſt like to be ſafe to thoſe, who much doto on them. And therefore thoſe that find they do ſo, had need to counter-biaſs their minds, and ſet them to ſomething better, and by more ſerious entertainments ſupplant thoſe vanities, which at the beſt are childiſh, and may often prove worſe, it being too probable that thoſe *Dinahs* which are ſtill gadding, though on pretence to ſee only the daughters of the land, *Gen.* xxxiv. may at laſt meet with a ſon of *Hamer*.

13. There is alſo another great devourer of time ſubſervient to the former, I mean dreſſing: for they that love to be ſeen much abroad, will be ſure to be ſeen in the moſt exact form. And this is an employment that does not ſteal, but challenge their time; what they waſte here is with a privilege, it being by the verdict of this age the proper buſineſs, the one ſcience wherein the young lady is to be perfectly verſed, ſo that now all virtuous emulation is to be converted into this ſingle ambition, who ſhall excel in this faculty. A vanity this which I confeſs is more excuſable in the younger than the elder ſort; they being ſuppoſable not yet to have outworn the relicks of their childhood, to which toys and gaiety were proportionable.

tionable. Beſides, it is ſure allowable upon a ſoberer account, that they who deſign marriage, ſhould give themſelves the advantage of decent ornaments, and not by the negligent rudeneſs of their dreſs belye nature, and render themſelves leſs amiable than ſhe has made them. But all this being granted, it will by no means juſtify that exceſſive curioſity and ſolicitude, that expence of time and money too which is now uſed. A very moderate degree of all thoſe will ſerve for that ordinary decency which they need provide for, will keep them from the reproach of an affected ſingularity, which is as much as a ſober perſon need take care for. And I muſt take leave to ſay, that in order to marriage, ſuch a moderation is much likelier to ſucceed, than the contrary extravagance. Among the prudenter ſort of men I am ſure it is, if it be not among the looſe and vain, againſt which it will be their guard, and ſo do them the greater ſervice. For certainly, he that chooſes a wife for thoſe qualities for which a wiſe man would refuſe her, underſtands ſo little what marriage is, as portends no great felicity to her that ſhall have him. But if they deſire to marry men of ſobriety and diſcretion, they are obliged in juſtice

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to bring the ſame qualities they expect, which will be very ill evidenced by that exceſs and vanity we now ſpeak of.

14. For to ſpeak a plain, though perhaps ungrateful truth, this, together with ſome of the modiſh liberties now in uſe, is it, which keeps ſo many young ladies about the town unmarried, till they loſe the epithet of young. Sober men are afraid to venture upon a humour ſo diſagreeing to their own, leſt whilſt, according to the primitive reaſon of marriage, they ſeek an help, they eſpouſe a ruin. But this is eſpecially dreadful to a plain country-gentleman, who looks upon one of theſe fine women as a gaudy idol, to whom if he once become a votary, he muſt ſacrifice a great part of his fortune, and all his content. How reaſonable that apprehenſion is, the many wrecks of conſiderable families do too evidently atteſt. But I preſume ſome of the nicer ladies have ſuch a contempt of any thing that they pleaſe to call ruſtic, that they will not much regret the averting of thoſe whom they ſo deſpiſe. They will not perhaps, while they are in purſuit or hopes of others; but when thoſe fail, theſe will be looked on as a welcome reſerve: and therefore it will be no prudence to

cut themſelves off from that laſt reſort, leſt they, as many have done, betake themſelves to much worſe. For as in many inſtances, it is the country which feeds and maintains the grandeur of the town; ſo of all commerces there, marriage would ſooneſt fail, if all rural ſupplies were cut off.

15. But I have purſued this ſpeculation farther than perhaps my Virgin-readers will thank me for: I ſhall return to that which it was brought to enforce, and beſeech them, that if not to men, yet to approve themſelves to God, they will confine themſelves in the matter of their dreſs, within the due limits of decency and ſobriety. I ſhall not direct them to thoſe ſtrict rules which *Tertullian* and ſome others of the antient fathers have preſcribed in this matter; my petition is only, that our Virgins would at leaſt ſo take care of their bodies, as perſons that alſo have a ſoul: which if they can be perſuaded to, they may reſerve much of their time for more worthy uſes, than thoſe of the comb, the toilets, and the glaſs. And truly, it is not a little their concern to do ſo: for this ſpring of their age is that critical inſtant, that muſt either confirm or blaſt the hopes of all the ſucceeding ſeaſons. The minds

of

of young people are uſually compared to a blank ſheet of paper, equally capable of the beſt or the worſt impreſſions: it is pity they ſhould be filled with childiſh ſcrawls, and little inſignificant figures; but it is ſhame and horror they ſhould be ſtained with any vicious characters, any blots of impurity or diſhonour. To prevent which, let the ſevereſt notions of modeſty and honour be early and deeply impreſt upon their ſouls, graven as with the point of a diamond, that they may be as indelible as they are indiſpenſably neceſſary to the Virgin ſtate.

16. There is alſo another very requiſite quality, and that is obedience. The younger ſort of Virgins are ſuppoſed to have parents; or if any have been ſo unhappy as to loſe them early, they commonly are left in the charge of ſome friend or guardian, that is to ſupply the place: ſo that they cannot be to ſeek to whom this obedience is to be paid. And it is no more their duty than their intereſt to pay it. Youth is apt to be fooliſh in its deſigns, and heedy in the purſuit of them; and there can be nothing more deplorable, than to have it left to itſelf. And therefore God, who permits not even the brutes to deſert their

young ones, till they attain to the perfection of their kind, has put children under the guidance and protection of their parents, till by the maturing of their judgments they are qualified to be their own conductors. Now this obedience (as that which is due to all other ſuperiors) is to extend itſelf to all things that are either good or indifferent, and has no clauſe of exception; but only where the command is unlawful. And in ſo wide a ſcene of action, there will occur ſo many particular occaſions of ſubmiſſion, that they had need have a great reverence of their parents' judgments, and diſtruſt of their own. And if it ſhould happen that ſome parents are not qualified to give them the former, yet the general imbecility of their age, will remain a conſtant ground of the latter: ſo that they may ſafelier venture themſelves to their parents' miſguidance than their own, by how much the errors of humility and obedience, are leſs malignant than thoſe of preſumption and arrogance.

17. But this is a doctrine which will ſcarce paſs for orthodox with many of the young women of our days, with whom 'tis prejudice enough againſt the prudenteſt advice, that it comes

comes from their parents. It is the grand ingenuity of theſe times to turn every thing into ridicule; and if a girl can but rally ſmartly upon the ſober admonition of a parent, ſhe concludes ſhe is the abler perſon, takes herſelf for a wit, and the other for a fop; a bug-bear word this, deviſed to fright all ſerioufneſs and ſobriety out of the world, and learns not only not to obey, but to contemn. Indeed, the great confidence that youth now ſeems to have of itſelf, as it is very indecent, ſo it is extremely pernicious. Children that will attempt to go alone before their time, often get dangerous falls: and when thoſe who are but little removed from children, ſhall caſt off the wiſer conduct of others, they often ſadly miſcarry by their own.

18. I know this age has ſo great a contempt of the former, that it is but matter of ſcorn to alledge any of their cuſtoms, elſe I ſhould ſay that the liberties that are taken now, would then have been ſtartled at. They that ſhould then have ſeen a young maid rambling abroad without her mother, or ſome other prudent perſon, would have looked on her as a ſtray, and thought it but a neighbourly office to have brought her home: whereas now

it is a rarity to ſee them in any company graver than themſelves, and ſhe that goes with her parent, unleſs it be ſuch a parent as is as wild as herſelf, thinks ſhe does but walk abroad with her Jailor. But ſure there are no ſmall miſchiefs that attend this liberty, for it leaves them perfectly to the choice of their company, a thing of too weighty an importance for giddy heads to determine; who will be ſure to elect ſuch as are of their own humour, with whom they may keep up a traffic of little impertinences and trifling entertainments; and ſo by conſequence condemn themſelves never to grow wiſer, which they might do by an ingenious converſation. Nay, it is well if that negative ill be the worſt, for it gives opportunity to any that have ill deſigns upon them. It will be eaſy getting into their company, who have no guard to keep any body out, and as eaſy by little compliances and flatteries, inſinuating into their good graces, who have not the ſagacity to diſcern to what inſidious purpoſes thoſe blandiſhments are directed; and when they once begin to nibble at the bait, to be pleaſed with the courtſhip, it is great odds they do not eſcape the hook.

19. Alas!

19. Alas! how many poor innocent creatures have been thus indiſcernibly enſnared; have at firſt perhaps only liked the wit and raillery, perhaps the language and addreſs, then the freedom and good humour; till at laſt they come to like the perſon. It is therefore a moſt neceſſary caution for young women, not to truſt too much to their own conduct, but to own their dependence on thoſe, to whom God and nature have ſubjected them, and to look on it not as their reſtraint and burden, but as their ſhelter and protection. For where once the authority of a parent comes to be deſpiſed, though in the lighteſt inſtance, it lays the foundation of utmoſt diſobedience. She that will not be preſcribed to in the choice of her ordinary diverting company, will leſs be ſo in chooſing the fixt companion of her life; and we find it often eventually true, that thoſe who govern themſelves in the former, will not be governed by their friends in the latter: but by pre-engagements of their own, prevent their elections for them.

20. And this is one of the higheſt injuries they can do their parents, who have ſuch a native right in them, that it is no leſs an injuſtice than diſobedience to diſpoſe of themſelves

ſelves without them. This right of the parent is ſo undoubted, that we find God himſelf gives way to it, and will not ſuffer the moſt holy pretence, no not that of a vow, to invade it, as we may ſee his own ſtating of the caſe, *Numb.* xxx. How will he then reſent it, to have this ſo indiſpenſible a law violated, upon the impulſe of an impotent paſſion, an amorous inclination? Nor is the folly leſs than the ſin: they injure and afflict their parents, but they generally ruin and undo themſelves. And that upon a double account, firſt as to the ſecular part. Thoſe that are ſo raſh as to make ſuch matches, cannot be imagined ſo provident, as to examine how agreeable it is to their intereſt, or to contrive for any thing beyond the marriage. The thoughts of their future temporal conditions, like thoſe of the eternal, can find no room amidſt their fooliſh raptures; but as if love were indeed that deity which the poets feigned, they depend on it for all, and take no farther care. And event does commonly too ſoon inſtruct them in the deceitfulneſs of that truſt; love being ſo unable to ſupport them, that it cannot maintain itſelf; but quickly expires when it has brought the lovers into thoſe ſtraits, from whence it

cannot

cannot reſcue them. So that indeed it does but play the decoy with them, brings them into the nooſe, and then retires. For when ſecular wants begin to pinch them, all the tranſports of their kindneſs, do uſually convert into mutual accuſations, for having made each other miſerable.

21. And indeed there is no reaſon to expect any better event, becauſe in the ſecond place, they forfeit their title to the divine bleſſing; nay, they put themſelves out of the capacity to aſk it, it being a ridiculous impudence to beg of God to proſper the tranſgreſſions of his law. Such weddings ſeem to invoke ſome of the poetic romantic deities, *Venus* and *Hymen*, from whence they derive a happineſs as fictitious as are the gods that are to ſend it. Let all Virgins therefore religiouſly obſerve this part of obedience to their parents, that they may not only have their benediction, but God's. And to that purpoſe let this be laid as a fundamental rule, that they never hearken to any propoſal of marriage made them from any other hand; but when any ſuch overture is made, divert the addreſs from themſelves, and direct it to their parents, which will be the beſt teſt imaginable for any pretender.

For

For if he know himſelf worthy of them, he will not fear to avow his deſign to theſe; and therefore if he decline that, it is a certain ſymptom, he is conſcious of ſomething he knows will not give a valuable conſideration; ſo that this courſe will repel no ſuitor, but ſuch as it is their intereſt not to admit. Beſides, it is moſt agreeable to the virgin-modeſty, which ſhould make marriage an act, rather of their obedience than their choice; and they that think their friends too ſlow-paced in the matter, and ſeek to out-run them, give cauſe to ſuſpect they are ſpurred on by ſomewhat too warm deſires.

22. But as a daughter is neither to anticipate, nor contradict the will of her parent, ſo, to hang the balance even, I muſt ſay ſhe is not obliged to force her own, by marrying where ſhe cannot love; for a negative voice in the caſe is ſure as much the child's right as the parent's. It is true, ſhe ought well to examine the grounds of her averſion, and if they prove only childiſh and fanciful, ſhould endeavour to correct them by reaſon and ſober conſideration; if after all ſhe cannot leave to hate, I think ſhe ſhould not proceed to marry. I confeſs I ſee not how ſhe can, without

without a ſacrilegious hypocriſy, vow ſo ſolemnly to love where ſhe at the inſtant actually abhors: and where the married ſtate is begun with ſuch a perjury, it is no wonder to find it continued at the ſame rate, that other parts of the vow be alſo violated; and that ſhe obſerve the negative part no more than the poſſitive, and as little forſake others, as ſhe does heartily cleave to her huſband. I fear this is a conſequence whereof there are too many ſad inſtances now extant; for though doubtleſs, there are ſome virtues which will hold out againſt all the temptations their averſions can give; nay, which do at laſt even conquer thoſe averſions, and render their duty as eaſy as they have kept it ſafe; yet we find there but ſome that do ſo; that it is no inſeparable property of the ſex, and therefore it is ſure too hazardous an experiment for any of them to venture on.

23. And if they may not upon the more generous motive of obedience, much leſs may they upon the worſe inducements of avarice and ambition; for a woman to make a vow to the man, and yet intend only to marry his fortune or his title, is the baſeſt inſincerity, and ſuch as in any other kind of civil contracts,

tracts, would not only have the infamy, but the punishment of a cheat. Nor will it at all secure them, that in this it is liable only to God's tribunal: for that is not like to make the doom less, but more heavy, it being as the apostle witnesses, *a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, Heb.* x. 31. In a word, marriage is God's ordinance, and should be considered as such; not made a stale or handle to any unworthy design. And it may well be presumed one cause why so few matches are happy, that they are not built upon a right foundation. Some are grounded upon wealth, some on beauty, too sandy bottoms, God knows, to raise any felicity on: whilst in the interim, virtue and piety, the only solid basis for that superstructure, are scarce ever considered. Thus God is commonly left out of the consultation. The lawyers are resorted to, to secure the settlements, all sorts of artificers to make up the equipage; but he is neither advised with as to the motives, nor scarce supplicated as to the event of wedding. Indeed, it is a deplorable sight to see with what lightness and unconcernedness young people go to that weightiest action of their lives; that a marriage-day is but a kind of a baccha-

a bacchanal, a more licenſed avowed revel: when, if they duly conſidered it, it is the hinge upon which their future life moves, which turns them over to a happy or miſerable being; and therefore ought to be entered upon with the greateſt ſerioufneſs and devotion. Our church adviſes excellently in the preface to matrimony: and I wiſh they would not only give it the hearing at the time, but make it their ſtudy a good while before: yea, and their marriage vow too; which is ſo ſtrict and awful a bond, that methinks they had need well weigh every branch of it, ere they enter into it; and by the ferventeſt prayers implore that God, who is the witneſs, to be their aſſiſtant too in its performance.

SECT.

SECT II.

OF WIVES.

1. AND now having conducted the Virgin to the entrance of another ſtate, I muſt ſhift the ſcene, and attend her thither alſo. And here ſhe is launched into a wide ſea, that one relation of a wife drawing after it many others: for as ſhe eſpouſes the man, ſo ſhe does his obligations alſo: and wherever he by ties of nature or alliance, owes a reverence or kindneſs, ſhe is no leſs a debtor. Her marriage is an adoption into his family, and therefore ſhe is to every branch of it to pay what their ſtations there do reſpectively require. To define which more particularly, would be a work of more length than profit. I ſhall therefore confine the preſent conſideration to the relation ſhe ſtands in to her huſband, and what is uſually concomitant with that, her children and her ſervants, and ſo ſhall conſider her in the three capacities of a wife, a mother, and a miſtreſs.

2. In

2. In that of a wife her duty has ſeveral aſpects, as it relates, firſt to his perſon, ſecondly to his reputation, thirdly to his fortune. The firſt debt to his perſon is love, which we find ſet as the prime article in the marriage-vow. And indeed that is the moſt eſſential requiſite; without this it is only a bargain and compact, a tyranny perhaps on the man's part, and a ſlavery on the woman's. It is love only that cements the hearts, and where that union is wanting, it is but a ſhadow, a carcaſs of marriage. Therefore as it is very neceſſary to bring ſome degree of this to this ſtate; ſo it is no leſs to maintain and improve it in it. This is it which facilitates all other duties of marriage; makes the yoke ſit ſo lightly, that it rather pleaſes than galls. It ſhould therefore be the ſtudy of wives to preſerve this flame; that like the *veſtal* fire it may never go out: and to that end carefully to guard it from all thoſe things which are naturally apt to extinguiſh it; of which kind are all frowardneſs and little perverſeneſs of humour: all ſullen and moroſe behaviour, which by taking off from the delight and complacency of converſation, will by degrees wear off the kindneſs.

3. But of all I know nothing more dangerous than that unhappy paſſion of jealouſy, which, though ſaid to be the child of love, yet, like the viper, its birth is the certain deſtruction of the parent. As therefore they muſt be nicely careful to give their huſbands no colour, not the leaſt umbrage for it; ſo ſhould they be as reſolute to reſiſt all that occurs to themſelves, be ſo far from that buſy curioſity, that induſtry to find cauſes of ſuſpicion; that even where they preſent themſelves, they ſhould avert the conſideration, and put the moſt candid conſtruction upon any doubtful action. And indeed charity in this inſtance hath not more of the dove than of the ſerpent. It is infinitely the wiſeſt courſe, both in relation to her preſent quiet, and her future innocence. The entertaining a jealous fancy, is the admitting the moſt treacherous, the moſt diſturbing in-mate in the world; and ſhe opens her breaſt to a fury that lets it in. It is certainly one of the moſt enchanting frenzies imaginable, keeps her always in a moſt reſtleſs importunate ſearch after that which ſhe dreads and abhors to find, and makes her equally miſerable when ſhe is injured, and when ſhe is not.

4. And

4. And as ſhe totally loſes her eaſe, ſo it is odds but ſhe will part alſo with ſome degrees of her innocence. Jealouſy is commonly attended with a black train: it muſters all the forces of our iraſcible part to abet its quarrel, wrath and anger, malice and revenge: and by how much the female impotence to govern thoſe paſſions is the greater, ſo much the more dangerous is it to admit that which will ſo ſurely ſet them in an uproar. For if *jealouſy* be, as the wiſe man ſays, *the rage of a man*, *Prov.* vi. 34. we may well think it may be the fury, the madneſs of a woman. And indeed all ages have given tragical inſtances of it, not only in the moſt indecent fierceneſs and clamour, but in the ſolemn miſchiefs of actual revenges. Nay, it is to be doubted there have been ſome whoſe malice has rebounded; who have ruined themſelves in ſpight, have been adulterous by way of retaliation, and taken more ſcandalous liberties than thoſe they complained of in their huſbands. And when ſuch enormous effects as theſe are the iſſues of jealouſy, it ought to keep a woman on the ſtricteſt guard againſt it.

5. But perhaps it may be ſaid, that ſome are not left to their jealouſy and conjectures,

but have more demonſtrative proofs. In this age it is indeed no ſtrange thing for men to publiſh their ſin as *Sodom*, and the offender does ſometimes not only diſcover, but boaſt his crime. In this caſe I confeſs it will be ſcarce poſſible to diſbelieve him; but even here a wife has this advantage, that ſhe is out of the pain of ſuſpence. She knows the utmoſt, and therefore is at leiſure to convert all that induſtry, which ſhe would have uſed for that diſcovery, to fortify herſelf againſt a known calamity, which ſure ſhe may as well do in this as in any other; a patient ſubmiſſion being the one remedy in all diſtreſſes; and as the ſlighteſt can overwhelm us, if we add our own impatience towards our ſinking, ſo the greateſt cannot, if we deny it that aid. They are therefore far in the wrong, who, in caſe of this injury, purſue their huſbands with virulencies and reproaches. This is, as *Solomon* ſays, *Prov.* xxv. 20. *The pouring vinegar upon nitre*, applying corroſives when balſams are moſt needed, whereby they not only encreaſe their own ſmart, but render the wound incurable. They are not thunders and earthquakes, but ſoft gentle rains that cloſe the ſciſſures of the ground; and the breaches of wedlock will never

ver be cemented by ſtorms and loud out-cries. Many men have been made worſe, but ſcarce any better by it: for guilt covets nothing more than an opportunity of recriminating; and where the huſband can accuſe the wife's bitterneſs, he thinks he needs no other apology for his own luſt.

6. A wiſe diſſimulation, or very calm notice, is ſure the likelieſt means of reclaiming: for where men have not wholly put off humanity, there is a native compaſſion to a meek ſufferer. We have naturally ſome regret to ſee a lamb under the knife; whereas the impatient roaring of a ſwine diverts our pity: ſo that patience in this caſe, is as much the intereſt as duty of a wife.

7. But there is another inſtance wherein that virtue has a ſeverer trial, and that is when a wife lies under the cauſeleſs jealouſies of the huſband; I ſay cauſeleſs, for if they be juſt, it is not ſo much a ſeaſon for patience as for repentance and reformation. This is ſure one of the greateſt calamities that can befal a virtuous woman; who as ſhe accounts nothing ſo dear as her loyalty and honour, ſo thinks no infelicity can equal the aſperſing of thoſe, eſpecially when it is from him, to whom ſhe has been the moſt

ſolicitous to approve herſelf. Yet God, who permits nothing but what he directs to ſome wiſe and gracious end, has an over-ruling hand in this, as well as in all other events of life; and therefore it becomes every woman in that condition, to examine ſtrictly what ſhe has done to provoke ſo ſevere a ſcourge. For though her heart condemn her not of any falſeneſs to her huſband, yet probably it may of many diſloyalties to her God; and then ſhe is humbly to accept even of this traducing of her innocence, as the puniſhment of her iniquity, and bear it with the ſame temper wherewith *David* did the unjuſt revilings of *Shimei*, 2 *Sam.* xvi. 10. *Let him curſe, for the Lord hath bidden him.*

8. And when ſhe has made this penitent reflection on her real guilts, ſhe may then with more courage encounter thoſe imaginary ones which are charged on her: wherein ſhe is to uſe all prudent and regular means for her juſtification, that being a debt ſhe owes to truth, and her own fame. But if after all, the ſuſpicion remains ſtill fixed, as commonly thoſe which are the moſt unreaſonable are the moſt obſtinate, ſhe may ſtill ſolace herſelf in her integrity, and God's approbation of it: nor ought

ought ſhe to think herſelf deſolate, that has her appeal open to Heaven. Therefore whilſt ſhe can look both inward and upward with comfort, why ſhould ſhe chuſe to fix her eyes only on the object of her grief? and whilſt her own complaint is of defamation, why ſhould ſhe ſo diſhonour God and a good conſcience, as to ſhew any thing can be more forcible to oppreſs, than they are to relieve and ſupport? And if ſhe may not indulge to grief, much leſs may ſhe to anger and bitterneſs.

9. Indeed, if ſhe conſider how painful a paſſion jealouſy is, her huſband will more need her pity; who though he be unjuſt to her, is yet cruel to himſelf. And as we do not uſe to hate and malign thoſe lunaticks, who in their fits beat their friends, and cut and gaſh themſelves; but rather make it our care to put all harmful engines out of their way; ſo ſhould the wife not deſpitefully ruminate upon the injury, but wiſely contrive to avert his temptations to more, by denying herſelf even the moſt innocent liberties, if ſhe ſee they diſſatisfy him. I know there have been ſome of another opinion; and as if they thought jealouſy were to be cured by increaſe, have in an angry contempt done things to inflame it,

put on an unwonted freedom and jollity, to ſhew their huſbands how little they had ſecured themſelves by their diſtruſt. But this as it is no chriſtian, ſo I conceive it is no prudent expedient: it ſerves to ſtrengthen, not only the huſband's ſuſpicion, but his party too, and makes many others of his mind: and it is a little to be feared, that by uſing ſo to brave the jealouſy, they may at laſt come to verify it. I have been the longer on this theme, becauſe as jealouſy is the moſt fatal peſt of a married life, ſo I think it more ordinarily occurs among people of quality, and with the worſt and moſt durable effects. Yet whatever pretences people may take hence, the marriage vow is too faſt a knot to be looſened by fancies and chimeras: let a woman therefore be the perſon ſuſpecting or ſuſpected, neither will abſolve her from that love to her huſband ſhe has ſworn to pay.

10. But, alas! what hope is there that theſe greater temptations ſhall be reſiſted, when we ſee every the ſlighteſt diſguſt is now-a-days too ſtrong for the matrimonial love. Nay, indeed, it does of courſe fall off of itſelf; which is an event ſo much expected, that it is no wonder to ſee it expire with the firſt circuit

cuit of the moon; but it is every body's admiration to ſee it laſt one of the ſun. And ſometimes it vaniſhes ſo clearly, as not to leave ſo much as a ſhadow behind it, not ſo much as the formalities of marriage: one bed, one houſe cannot hold them: as if they had been put together like caſe-ſhot in a gun, only that they might the more forcibly ſcatter ſeveral ways. Nay, as if this were deſigned and intended in the firſt addreſſes unto marriage, a ſeparate maintenance is of courſe afore-hand contracted for, and becomes as ſolemn a part of the ſettlement as the jointure is. *Plutarch* obſerves of the ancient Romans, that, for 230 years after the founding of their ſtate, there never was one example of any married couple that ſeparated: it is not likely they could have a more binding form of marriage than ours is, the difference muſt lie between their veracity and our falſeneſs.

11. But even amongſt thoſe who deſert not each other, too many do mutually fall from that entireneſs and affection which is the ſoul of marriage; and to help on the declination, there are faſhionable maxims taken up, to make men and their wives the greateſt ſtrangers to each other. Thus it is pronounced a piece

piece of ill breeding, a ſign of a country gentleman, to ſee a man go abroad with his own wife, and I ſuppoſe thoſe who brought up theſe rules, are not to ſeek what uſe to make of them. And were the time of moſt of the modiſh couples computed, it would be found they are but few of their waking hours (I might ſay minutes) together: ſo that if nothing elſe, mere deſuetude and intermiſſion of converſation muſt needs allay, if not quite extinguiſh their kindneſs. But I hope there are yet many who do not think the authority of a faſhion, greater than that of a vow: and ſuch will ſtill think it their duty both to own and cheriſh that kindneſs and affection they have ſo ſolemnly promiſed.

12. Another debt to the perſon of a huſband is fidelity: for as ſhe has eſpouſed all his intereſts, ſo ſhe is obliged to be true to them, keep all his ſecrets, to inform him of his dangers, yea, and in a mild and gentle manner, to admoniſh him of his faults. This is the moſt genuine act of friendſhip; therefore ſhe who is placed in the neareſt and moſt intimate degree of that relation, muſt not be wanting in it. She that lies in his boſom ſhould be a kind of ſecond conſcience to him, by putting him

him in mind both of his duty and his aberration: and as long as ſhe can be but patiently heard, it is her ſin to omit it: it is the greateſt treachery to his nobleſt, to his immortal part, and ſuch as the moſt officious cares of his other intereſts can never expiate. Nay, indeed, ſhe is unfaithful to herſelf in it, there being nothing that does ſo much ſecure the happineſs of a wife, as the virtue and piety of her huſband. Yet, though this is to have her chiefeſt care, as being his principal intereſt, ſhe is to neglect none of the inferior, but contribute her utmoſt to his advantage in all his concerns.

13. Beyond all theſe the matrimonial fidelity has a ſpecial notion, as it relates to the bed; and in that the wife is to be moſt ſeverely ſcrupulous, and never to admit ſo much as a thought or imagination, much leſs any parly or treaty contrary to her loyalty. It is true, wantonneſs is one of the foulеſt blots that can ſtain any of the ſex; but it is infinitely more odious in the married, it being in them an accumulation of crimes, perjury added to uncleanneſs, the infamy of their family ſuperſtructed upon their own. And accordingly all laws have made a difference in their puniſhments. Adultery was by God's own

own award puniſhed with death among the Jews. *Lev.* xx. 10. And it ſeems it was ſo agreeable to natural juſtice, that divers other nations did the like; and I know no reaſon, but the difficulty of detection, that ſhould any where give it a milder ſentence. The ſon of *Sirach* has excellently deſcribed the ſeveral gradations of the guilt, *Eccluſ.* xxiii. 23. which I ſhall deſire the reader to conſult; which who ſo does, muſt certainly wonder at the alchymy of this age, that from ſuch a maſs of ſhame and infamy, can extract matter of confidence: that thoſe who lie under ſo many brands and ſtigmas, are ſo far from hiding their faces, that none ſhew them with ſo much boldneſs, and the aſſurance of the guilty far exceeds that of the innocent. But impudence is a ſlender ſhelter for guilt, and ſerves rather to betray than hide, ſo that they are not able to outface the opinions of men, much leſs can they the judgments of God; who as he was ſolemnly invoked as a witneſs to their vow, ſo by his omnipreſence is againſt their wills, a witneſs too of its violations.

14. Another duty to the perſon of the huſband is obedience, a word of very harſh ſound in the ears of ſome wives, but is certainly the

duty

duty of all: and that not only by their promiſe of it, though that were ſufficient; but from an original of much elder date, it being the mulct that was laid upon the firſt woman's diſobedience to God, that ſhe, and all derived from her, ſhould be ſubject to the huſband; ſo that the contending for ſuperiority, is an attempt to reverſe that fundamental law, which is almoſt as ancient as the world. But ſurely God, with whom there is no ſhadow of change, will not make acts of repeal to ſatisfy the petulancy of a few maſterleſs women. That ſtatute will ſtill ſtand in force, and if it cannot awe them into an obſervance, it will not fail to conſign them to puniſhment. And indeed this fault is commonly its own lictor, and does anticipate, though not avert, its final doom. The imperiouſneſs of a woman does often raiſe thoſe ſtorms, wherein herſelf is ſhip-wrecked. How pleaſantly might many women have lived, if they had not affected dominion? Nay, how much of their will might they have had, if they had not ſtruggled for it? For let a man be of never ſo gentle a temper, unleſs his head be ſofter than his heart, ſuch an uſurpation will awaken him to aſſert his right. But if he be of a ſour ſevere nature, if he has as great a deſire

a deſire of rule as ſhe, ſupported with a much better title, what tempeſts, what hurricanes muſt two ſuch oppoſite winds produce? And at laſt it is commonly the wife's lot, after an uncreditable and unjuſt war, to make as diſadvantageous a peace; this like all other ineffective rebellions, ſerving to ſtraiten the yoke, to turn an ingenuous ſubjection into a ſlaviſh ſervitude. So that certainly it is not only the virtue, but the wiſdom of wives, to do that upon duty which at laſt they muſt (with more unſupportable circumſtances) do upon neceſſity.

15. And as they owe theſe ſeverals to the perſon of the huſband, ſo there is alſo a debt to his reputation. This they are to be extremely tender of, to advance it, by making all that is good in him as conſpicuous, as publick, as they can; ſetting his worth in the cleareſt light, but putting his infirmities in the ſhade; caſting a veil upon thoſe to ſkreen them from the eyes of others, nay, as far as is poſſible, from their own too; there being nothing acquired to the wife by contemplating the huſband's weakneſs, but a temptation of deſpiſing him; which, though bad enough in itſelf, is yet rendered worſe by that train of miſchievous

miſchievous conſequences which uſually attend it. In caſe therefore of any notable imperfections in him, her ſafeſt way will be to conſider them no farther than ſhe can be inſtrumental to the curing of them; but to divert from thoſe, and reflect upon her own, which perhaps, if impartially weighed, may balance, if not overpoiſe his. And indeed thoſe wives who are apt to blaze their huſbands faults, do ſhew that they have either little adverted to their own, or elſe find them ſo great, that they are forced to that art of diverſion, that ſeek in his infamy to drown theirs. But that project is a little unlucky, for nothing does in ſo ſober judges, create greater prejudice to a woman, than to ſee her forward in impeaching her huſband.

16. But beſides this immediate tenderneſs of his reputation, there is another by way of reflection, which conſiſts in a care that ſhe herſelf do nothing which may redound to his diſhonour. There is ſo ſtrict an union between a man and his wife, that the law counts them one perſon, and conſequently they can have no divided intereſt: ſo that the miſbehaviour of the woman reflects ignominiouſly on the man. It therefore concerns them, as well

well upon their huſbands as their own account, to abſtain even from all appearance of evil, and provide that themſelves be (what *Cæſar* is ſaid to have required of his wife) not only without guilt, but without ſcandal alſo.

17. Another part of the wife's duty relates to her huſband's fortune, the management whereof is not ordinarily the wife's province: but where the huſband thinks fit to make it ſo, ſhe is obliged to adminiſter it with her beſt care and induſtry; not by any neglect of hers, to give others opportunity of defrauding him: yet on the other ſide, not by any immoderate tenacity or griping, to bring upon him and herſelf the reproach, and which is worſe, the curſe that attends exaction and oppreſſion. But this is not uſually the wife's field of action, though he that ſhall conſider the deſcription which *Solomon* gives of a virtuous wife, *Prov.* xxxi. will be apt to think her province is not ſo narrow and confined, as the humour of the age will repreſent it. He tells us, *That ſhe ſeeks wool and flax, and works diligently with her hands: that ſhe is like the merchants ſhips, and brings her food from far.* That *ſhe conſiders a field, and buys it, and with the fruit of her hands plants a vineyard,* &c. And leſt this

this ſhould be imagined to be the character of a mean country dame, adds that *her houſhold is clothed with ſcarlet*, and that *her huſband ſits among the elders of the land.* It were eaſy to give inſtances from hiſtory, of the advantageous management and active induſtry of wives, not only in ſingle perſons, but in whole nations. But nothing can be more pregnant, than that among the *Romans*, in the very height and flouriſh of the empire. *Auguſtus* himſelf *ſcarce wore any thing but of the manufacture of his wife, his ſiſter, daughter, and nieces*, as *Suetonius* aſſures us. Should the gay *lillies of our fields, which neither ſow nor ſpin, nor gather into barns*, be exempted from furniſhing others, and left to clothe themſelves, it is to be doubted they would reverſe our Saviour's parallel of *Solomon's glories*, and no beggar in all his rags *would be arrayed like one of theſe*, Luke xii. 27.

18. But we will be yet more kind, and impoſe only negative thrift on the wife, not to waſte and embezzle her huſband's eſtate, but to confine her expences within ſuch limits as that can eaſily admit: a caution, which if all women had obſerved, many noble families had been preſerved, of which there now re-

mains no other memorial, but that they fell a ſacrifice to the profuſe vanity of a woman; and I fear this age is like to provide many more ſuch monuments for the next. Our ladies, as if they emulated the *Roman* luxury (which *Seneca* and *Pliny* deſcribe with ſo much indignation) do ſometimes wear about them the revenues of a rich family; and thoſe that cannot reach to that, ſhew how much it is againſt their wills they fall lower, by the vaſt variety and exceſs of ſuch things as they can poſſibly compaſs; ſo much extravagance, not only in their own dreſs, but that of their houſes and apartments, as if their vanity, like the leproſy we read of, *Lev.* xiv. 37. had infected the very walls. And indeed it is a very ſpreading fretting one, for the furniture often conſumes the houſe, and the houſe conſumes the land: ſo that if ſome gentlemen were to calculate their eſtates, they might reduce all to the inventory of *Scopias* and *Theſſalian*, who profeſt his *All* lay only in ſuch toys as did him no good. Women are now ſkilful chymiſts, and can quickly turn their huſbands' earth into gold: but they purſue the experiment too far, make that gold too volatile, and let it

all

all vapour away in insignificant, though gaudy, trifles.

19. Nor is it ever like to be otherwise with those that immoderately affect the town, that forge of vanity, which supplies a perpetual spring of new temptations. It is true, there are some ladies who are necessarily engaged to be there: their husbands employments or fortunes have marked that out as their proper station, and where the ground of their stay is their duty, there is more reason to hope it will not betray them to ill; for temptations are most apt to assault stragglers, those that put themselves out of their proper road. And truly I see not who can more properly be said to be so, than those women whose means of subsistence lies in the country, and yet will spend it no where but at *London*: which seems to carry something of opposition to God's providence, who surely never caused their lot to fall, as the *Psalmist* speaks, *in a fair ground, in goodly heritages*, Psal. xvi. with an intent they should never inhabit them. The twelve tribes of *Israel* had their peculiar portions in *Canaan* assigned them by lot, *Jos.* xiv. ii. and every one acquiesced in his part, dwelt in his own inheritance. Had they been impatient

of living any where but in the metropolis, had they all crouded to *Jeruſalem*, all the reſt of the land would have been as deſolate before the captivity as it was after, none would have been left but ſuch as *Nebuzaradan* permitted to ſtay, *Jer.* lii. 16. *ſome of the poor to dreſs the vines, and to till the ground.* And truly, the ſame is like to be the fate of this nation, if this humour goes on as it has begun; which may in time prove as miſchievous to the publick, as it daily is to private families.

20. But beſides this, it is yet farther to be conſidered, that where God gives an eſtate, he as the ſupreme landlord affixes ſomething of duty, lays a kind of rent charge upon it, expects it ſhould maintain both hoſpitality and charity; and ſure both theſe are fitteſt to be done upon the place whence the ability of them riſes. All publick taxes uſe to be levied where the eſtate lies: and I know not why theſe which are God's aſſeſſments upon it, ſhould not be paid there too. When a gentleman's land becomes profitable unto him by the ſweat and labour of his poor neighbours and tenants, it will be a kind of *muzzling the ox*, 1 *Cor.* ix .9. if they never taſte of the fruit

fruit of their pains, if they ſhall never have the refreſhment of a good meal, or an alms; which they are not very like to meet with, if all the profits be ſent up to maintain an equipage, and keep up a parade in town. But alas! it is often not only the annual profits that go that way, not only the crop, but the ſoil too; thoſe luxuries uſually prey upon the vitals, eat out the very heart of an eſtate, and many have ſtaid in the town, till they have nothing left in the country to retire to.

21. Now where this proceeds from the wife, what account can ſhe give to her huſband, whoſe eaſineſs and indulgence (for that muſt be ſuppoſed in the caſe) ſhe has ſo abuſed; as alſo to her poſterity and family, who for her pride muſt be brought low, reduced to a condition beneath their quality, becauſe ſhe affected to live above it? But ſhe will yet worſe anſwer it to herſelf, on whom ſhe has brought not only the inconvenience but the guilt. It is ſure a loſty mind will feel ſmart enough of a fall; a diminution, much more an indigence, will be ſufficiently grievous to a vain and laviſh humour; yet here it will farther have an additional ſting from the conſcience, that ſhe owes it only to her own

pride and folly, a moſt embittering conſideration, and ſuch as advances the affliction beyond that of a more innocent poverty; as much as the pain of an envenomed arrow exceeds that of another.

22. But the ſaddeſt reckoning of all is that which ſhe is to make to God, who has declared he hates robbery, though for a burnt-offering to himſelf. How will he then deteſt this robbery, this impoveriſhing of the huſband, when it is only to make an oblation to vanity and exceſs? It ſhould therefore be the care of all wives to keep themſelves from a guilt for which God and man, yea, and themſelves alſo ſhall equally accuſe them, and to keep their expences within ſuch limits, that as bees ſuck, but not to violate or deface the flowers, ſo they as joint proprietaries with the huſbands, may enjoy, but not devour and deſtroy his fortune.

23. I have now run through the duties to be performed unto the huſbands, wherein I have not uſed the exactneſs of a caſuiſt, in curiouſly anatomizing every part, and ſhewing all the moſt minute particulars reducible to each head. I have only drawn out the greater lines, and inſiſted on thoſe wherein wives

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are moſt frequently deficient. I ſhall only add this caution, that whatever is duty to the huſband, is equally ſo, be he good or ill. The Apoſtle commands ſubjection and fidelity even to an heathen huſband, 1 *Pet.* iii. 12. and it is not now their defect either in piety or morality, that can abſolve the wife. For, beſides the inconvenience of making her duty precarious, and liable to be ſubſtracted upon every pretence of demerit, ſhe has by ſolemn contract renounced that liberty, and in her marriage-vow taken him for better for worſe; and it is too late *after vows to make enquiry*, *Prov.* xx. 25. to ſeek to break looſe from the bond of her ſoul; and how uneaſy ſoever the perverſeneſs of the huſband may render it, he cannot thereby make it leſs, but more rewardable by God. For what the Apoſtle ſpeaks in the caſe of ſervants, is no leſs applicable to this, 1 *Pet.* ii. 19. for *this is thank-worthy, if for conſcience toward God ye endure grief, ſuffering wrongfully.* Whatever duty is performed to man with aſpect on God, he owns it as to himſelf; ſo that how unworthy ſoever the huſband may be, the wife cannot miſplace her obſervance, whilſt ſhe finally terminates

it on that infinite goodneſs and majeſty, to whom no love or obedience can be enough.

24. From this relation of a wife, there ordinarily ſprings another, that of a mother; to which there belongs a diſtinct duty, which may be branched into many ſeverals: but I ſhall at preſent only reduce them to two heads, Love and Care. A mother is a title of ſo much tenderneſs, that we find it borrowed by our common dialect to expreſs the moſt exuberant kindneſs; nay, even in ſacred ſtyle it has the ſame uſe, and is often ſet as the higheſt example our weakneſs can comprehend of the divine compaſſions. So that nature ſeems ſufficiently to have ſecured the love of mothers to their children, without the aid of any poſitive law. Yet we find this (as other inſtincts of nature) is ſometimes violated, and oftener perverted and applied to miſtaken purpoſes: the firſt is by a defect of Love; the other, by an imprudent exceſs of it. The defect does, I preſume, more rarely occur than the other; yet it doth ſometimes happen, and that either from a moroſe ſourneſs of humor, or elſe from too vehement an intention on ſomething elſe.

25. Some women have ſuch a ruggedneſs of nature, that they can love nothing. The ugly

ugly paſſions of anger and envy have, like *Pharaoh*'s lean kine, eat up the more amiable of love and joy. *Plato* was wont to adviſe crabbed auſtere tempers to ſacrifice to the *Graces*; and ſuch as theſe had need have a great deal of chriſtian philoſophy, to allay and ſweeten their native bitterneſs. But there are others that are not void of the affection of love, but it is fore ſtalled by ſome other object, and ſo diverted from their children. And it is little to be doubted, that thoſe objects which ſo divert are none of the beſt. For the wiſdom of God has diſpoſed all duty into ſuch an harmony and conſent of parts, that one interferes not with another. If we love no prohibited thing, all the regular objects of our kindneſs will agree well enough, and one need never ſupplant another. And indeed it is often obſervable, that thoſe women who immoderately love their own pleaſures, do leſs regard their children; they look on them as clogs to keep them within doors, and think their adverting to them, will hinder their free range abroad; thoſe are turned off to the care of a nurſe or maid, whilſt perhaps a dog or monkey is thought worthy their own attendance.

26. *Plutarch*

26. *Plutarch* relates it as a ſarcaſm of *Cæſar*'s to ſome foreigners whom he ſaw at *Rome*, ſtrangely fond of ſuch little animals, that he aſked them, whether the women in their country had no children; thereby intimating, how unreaſonable it was for thoſe that had, to beſtow their careſſes on ſuch creatures. And ſurely he would not have given a milder reprimand to ſome of our ladies, who not only pleaſe, but pride themſelves in thoſe littles brutes, ſhew them to all comers, when perhaps you may converſe with them divers days, before you ſhall, by any mention of theirs, know that they have a child.

27. To the defect of Love, many are apt to impute the mother's transferring the nurſing her child to another. I am not forward to pronounce of it, being loth to involve ſo many as I then muſt in the imputation of unnaturalneſs; I rather think it is taken up as a piece of ſtate and greatneſs; for no other motive, but what is founded in their quality, could univerſally prevail with all that are of it. But ſure this is one of the vain punctilioes wherewith this age abounds. For whatever rank the mother is of, the child carries proportion to it, and there is the ſame equality between

between the greateſt lady and her own child, as is between the meaneſt beggar and hers; though indeed if there were any condeſcenſion in it, the averſions of that ought not to outweigh the impulſes of nature, and the many advantages the child may receive by taking its nouriſhment whence it derived its ſubſtance. And therefore though I will not be too poſitive in aſſerting the neceſſity, yet I confeſs, I cannot but look with reverence on thoſe few perſons of honor, who have broke through an unreaſonable cuſtom, and preferred the good of their children before that fantaſtic privilege of greatneſs. And ſuch muſt in all juſtice be acknowledged to have given a much better evidence of their love to their children, than the others.

28. There is in *A. Gellius*, in his fourteenth book, ſo fine a diſcourſe on this ſubject, where *Favorinus* the philoſopher is introduced, perſuading a noble lady, notwithſtanding the uſual excuſes, to nurſe her child; that nothing beſides the length, could tempt me to omit the tranſcribing it. Unleſs happily the little ſucceſs, which a noble perſon of the ſame ſex here concerned, I mean the Counteſs of *Lincoln*, in the ingenious book, wrote by

by her, and called her *Nurſery*, be a ſufficient ground of deſpairing to convince by any thing that can be ſaid. However, let theſe delicate ones conſider the ſevere words of the prophet, Lamen. iv. 3. *The ſea monſters draw out the breaſt, they give ſuck to their young ones: the daughter of my people is become cruel like the oſtrich in the wilderneſs*, who *is hardened againſt her young ones, as though they were not hers: her labor is in vain without fear, becauſe God hath deprived her of wiſdom, neither hath he imparted to her underſtanding.* Job xxxix. 16.

29. But as there may be a fault in the defect, ſo there may be alſo in the exceſs of Love. God is the only unlimited object of our love, towards all others it is eaſy to become inordinate, and in no inſtance more than this of children. The love of a parent is deſcending, and all things move moſt violently downwards: ſo that whereas that of children to their parents commonly needs a ſpur, this of the parent often needs a bridle; eſpecially that of the mother, which, by ſtrength of feminine paſſion, does uſually exceed the love of the father. Now to regulate this affection, ſhe is to advert to theſe two rules, firſt, that ſhe hurt not herſelf by it, and ſecondly, that ſhe hurt

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not her children. Of the firſt, ſhe is in danger if ſhe ſuffer that human affection to ſwell beyond his banks, ſo as to come in any competition with the divine. This is to make an idol of her child: for every thing is ſo to us, which rivals the love of God in our hearts: and he who own the title of a jealous God, may be provoked as well by our bowing our ſouls to a living image, as the proſtration of our bodies to a dead. Accordingly we often ſee the effects of his jealouſy in this particular. The doting affection of the mother, is frequently puniſhed with the untimely death of her children; or if not with that, it is many times with a ſeverer ſcourge. They live (but as it was foretold to *Eli*, 1 *Sam.* ii. 33.) *to grieve her eyes, and to conſume her heart*, to be ruinous to themſelves, and afflictions to their friends, and to force their unhappy mothers to that ſad exclamation, *Luke* xxiii. 29. *Bleſſed are the wombs that never bare.*

30. And as this proves often true, when the dotage is generally upon all the children, ſo does it oftner when it is more partial and fixed upon any one: that darling which ſhe makes the only object of her joy, uſually becomes that of her ſorrow. It is an ordinary infirmi-

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ty in parents, to heap all their kindneſs upon one to the defrauding of the reſt, and too many times upon very undue motives: a little excelling in point of beauty turns the ſcales, when perhaps many more ſolid excellencies are the counter-poiſe. And ſurely this is not only unjuſt but irrational in the parent: for all peculiarity of favour in a ſuperior ſhould be diſpenſed either by way of reward, or encouragement; and neither of thoſe ends can take place, where it is only the outward form that is conſidered. For that cannot be rewardable, to which the party has contributed nothing; and the *Pſalmiſt* will tell us, That *it is* God *that hath made us, and not we ourſelves. Pſalm* c. 2. And as little room is there for the other end, that of encouragement. For, as our Saviour tells us, *Matth.* vi. *none can add a cubit to his ſtature, nor make one hair white or black.* It is certain themſelves cannot really do either, though by the aid of artificial hypocriſy they frequently appear to do both. But thoſe are arts which neither deſerve nor want encouragement: the natural beauty muſt have its increaſe from the ſame ſource it derived its being. There is therefore no reaſonable

able account to be given, why a child ſhould be preferred for any ſuch exterior excellency.

31. The only juſtifiable ground of partiality to children is their virtue: for to that their own choice concurs, and ſo may intitle them to reward; and it is alſo in their power to advance, and ſo encouragements are not caſt away upon them. Nay, the influences of thoſe may extend farther, and provoke a virtuous emulation in the reſt. But then the mother muſt ſo manage it, as to evidence that it is no inequality in her own inclination, but merely the force of the others deſert; not the perſon, but the goodneſs that biaſſes her: and when virtue is known to be the only ingratiating quality, they will at once learn the way to become her's and God's favourites. And unleſs it be upon this one deſign, it is a very unſafe thing for a parent to make any partial diſcrimination among children, which is ſure to tempt the more neglected both to repine at her, and envy her darlings. And oftentimes ſuch ſeeds of rancor have been by that means ſowed in children, as have been hard to eradicate in their riper years. Nor is the miſchief leſs which ſhe does to her fondlings, who, beſides that they are expoſed to

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the malice of the reſt, are uſually ſpoiled by it, made inſolent and untractable, perhaps their whole lives after: for where the mother's affection is unbridled, commonly the child's will is ſo too, her fondneſs ſuperſeding that diſcipline and correction, which ſhould, as the wiſe man ſpeaks, *bow down its neck from its youth.*

32. And the like may be ſaid where the indulgence is more univerſal to all the children, which is in one reſpect worſe than the partial, becauſe it ſpoils more; not one or two, but all the brood. The doting love of a mother blinds her eyes that ſhe cannot ſee their faults, manacles her hands, that ſhe cannot chaſtiſe them, and ſo their vices are permitted to grow up with themſelves. As their joints knit and gather ſtrength, ſo do their ill habits, till at laſt they are confirmed into an obſtinacy; ſo ſetting them in a perfect oppoſition to that pattern they ſhould imitate: for as Chriſt's childhood *increaſed in wiſdom*, and the divine favour, *Luke* ii. ſo do theirs in all thoſe provoking follies, which may avert both the love of God and man. And alas! what recompence can the little blandiſhments and careſſes of a mother make her children, for ſuch important

portant, ſuch ineſtimable miſchiefs? So that ſhe that will be really kind, muſt temper her indulgence with a prudent ſeverity, or elſe ſhe eminently violates the ſecond rule, by which ſhe ſhould regulate her love, and does that to her children, which *Jacob* feared from his father, *Gen.* xxvii. *Brings a curſe upon them, and not a bleſſing.*

33. Indeed the beſt way of approving their love, is by well diſcharging the other branch of their duty, that of care. Without this, all the moſt paſſionate raptures of kindneſs are but an aery apparition, a fantaſtic ſcene, and will no more advantage a child, than the whole ſhambles in picture can feed and nouriſh it. Now this care is not a temporary, momentary duty, for ſome one critical inſtant; but is to attend the child through the ſeveral ſtages of its minority, viz. Infancy, Childhood, and Youth. The very firſt part of their infancy, is a ſeaſon only for thoſe cares which concern their bodies, providing for their careful attendance, and all other things conducing to the ſtrengthening their conſtitutions, and laying a foundation for future health and vigor. Which is their intereſt not only upon a bodily, but upon an intellectual account, the good

temperature of the body being a great aid towards the free operations of the mind. And therefore *Socrates*, and other philoſophers, much recommend to their diſciples the care of health, as that which freed the ſoul from many incumbrances in its purſuit of knowledge: and it was the comprehenſive prayer of the poet, *That the gods would grant a ſound mind in an healthful body.*

34. But this health is not always the conſequent of a very nice and tender breeding, but is very often overthrown by it; and if ladies could but find in their heart to try it, they would, I doubt not, find, that the inuring them to moderate hardſhips, would much more conduce to the eſtabliſhing and fortifying their conſtitutions.

35. Beyond all this, the care for their exterior is ſoon overtaken by a more important one, that of their interior, in the timing of which there ſeems to be a very common miſtake in the world. We look upon the ſeven years of infancy, as the life merely of an animal, to be ſpent only in the entertainments of ſenſe: and as we uſe not to yoak calves, or back young colts, ſo we think our children are for a while to be left at the ſame liberty,

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to have no reſtraint put on any of their paſſions. Nay many times we excite and foment them, teach children to be angry and envious, proud and ſullen, as if we feared their natural propenſions to all theſe were too faint, and wanted the help of inſtitutions. But ſurely this is a great and pernicious error; and this ſuppoſing children to be ſo long brutes, is the way to make them ſo longer. The patrons of atheiſm make it a moſt conſtant topic in the diſparagement of religion, that it is owed to the prejudices infuſed in the firſt infancy: it were to be wiſhed that this objection were ſo far to be complied with, that the fear of God, the love of virtue, and hatred of vice, might have the firſt poſſeſſion of the ſoul; and they be made to moderate their paſſions, as ſoon as they are in a capacity to have them excited and engaged.

36. And truly if we will obſerve it, we may ſee very early dawnings of reaſon in infants, which would ſooner come to a brightneſs, if we would betimes ſet to the ſcattering of thoſe paſſions which eclipſe and darken it. A child will quickly be taught to know what pleaſes or diſpleaſes a parent, and by a very little taſte of reward or puniſhment will

learn to do the one, and avoid the other: and when this is done, the parent has gained the fundamental point, that of *obedience*, and may ſuperſtruct on it what ſhe pleaſes, and then it is her fault if the child be not by eaſy and inſenſible degrees moulded into a right form. It is at firſt all one to the child, whether he name God in an oath or in his prayers; but a mother, by puniſhing the one, and rewarding the other, will quickly bring him to know there is a difference; and ſo proportionably in other inſtances. As to the way of diſcipline, it may not be amiſs to obſerve, that when there is occaſion for ſeverity, it is better to awe by actual puniſhment than terror, and never to make uſe of infinite and inviſible affrightments, the beloved methods of nurſes and ſervants; ſuch as are the menacing of ſprights and mormos, and leaving in the dark, that frequently make daſtardly and timorous impreſſions, which a long age ſcarcely wears off.

37. A ſober ſenſe of things, is to be impreſſed by treatable means; and this will be done with moſt eaſe both to the parent and child, the ſooner it is ſet upon. The will of a tender infant, is like its limbs, ſupple and pliant,

pliant, but time confirms it, and cuſtom hardens it: ſo that it is a cruel indulgence to the poor creature, to let it contract ſuch habits, which muſt coſt him ſo dear the breaking, and dearer if never broken. And if this early care be taken of the infancy, it will much eaſe the next part, that of the childhood; for where the ſinew in the neck is broken, where the native ſtubbornneſs is ſubdued ſo early, the yoke will ſit eaſy, all ſucceeding parts of diſcipline will come with more facility and profit. The care proper to this age, is, the inſtructing in all parts of uſeful knowledge, of which, as the divine, for the excellency both of its nature and its end, muſt be firſt ranked, ſo ſhould it be firſt and moſt induſtriouſly cultivated, and by all endearing methods impreſt, not only on the underſtanding, but the heart. Piety and virtue ſhould be propoſed to children as the moſt amiable, as well as neceſſary things, and they ſhould be invited not only to know but love them.

38. This part of learning is equally competent to both ſexes, and therefore when the ſons are removed from under the mothers tuition, and ſent to more public places of erudition, her province is ſtill the ſame

as to her daughters, to whom ſhe ſhould not only preach, but exemplify it in her own practice; no precepts penetrating ſo much into youth, as thoſe that are ſo enforced. And in order to this, I ſhould commend to mothers, the being as much with them as they can, and taking the perſonal inſpection of them; not to turn them off wholly to ſervants, no, nor yet governeſſes, but frequently themſelves to examine how they proceed in the ſpeculative part of knowledge; and no leſs frequently exhort them to the practice.

39. *Marcus Cato* would not let his ſon learn of his ſlave, as diſdaining a child ſhould owe ſo conſiderable a benefit to ſo ſervile a perſon; and if he thought the mere teaching of grammar too great a charge for ſuch a one, ſurely the whole inſtitution of youth is a much greater, it being that on which, not only a few outward accompliſhments, but even their eternity depends. The great *Cornelia*, mother of the *Gracchi*, and *Aurelia* the mother of *Auguſtus*, thought it worth their pains to be governeſſes. And the truth is, the ſoul of a child is a little too precious a truſt to commit wholly to the diligence and care of a mercenary ſervant. Or if they do happen not to want

want thoſe qualifications, yet it is very poſſible they may prudence, of which there is no ſmall degree requiſite to the inſtructing of youth, too great a remiſſneſs or ſeverity being equally deſtructive in that affair. And indeed beſides theſe immediate, there are ſome other collateral benefits conſequent to the mother's performing that office: it will bring her and her children into an intimacy and converſation, give her an acquaintance with their ſeveral capacities and humours; for want of which, many parents have erred in their conduct, one ſort of treatment being not fit for all children, and the diſtinguiſhing that, depending wholly on their diſcerning their particular tempers, which cannot well be done without ſome converſe with them.

40. Beſides, by this they will be witneſſes how they diſpoſe their time, that they neither loſe it by doing nothing, nor yet miſemploy it by doing ill. And indeed there is ſcarce any part of the parent's care more important than this; idleneſs being no farther removed from vice, than a cauſe is from its immediate effect. Therefore if children be permitted to trifle away their time, they will ſoon learn to trifle away their innocence alſo. So that it is highly neceſſary that they be provided with a

ſucceſſion of employments, that by the variety they may be inſenſibly drawn on. Nay, methinks, it might very well be contrived that their recreations might ſometimes conſiſt of ſuch ingenious exerciſes, that they may at once play and learn.

41. There is yet another good effect of the mother's preſence with the children, which perhaps is no leſs material than any of the former: it is, that by this aſſociating them with herſelf, ſhe prevents the danger of worſe ſociety. Children, if the parents allow them not their company, are neceſſarily caſt upon that of ſervants, than which there is ſcarce a greater danger that attends youth. For beſides that low ſort of converſe debaſes their minds, makes them mean and ſordid, it often corrupts their manners too; children, uſually not receiving more peſtilent infuſions from any than ſuch. Servants that deſire to ingratiate themſelves, and have no laudable quality whereby to do it, muſt firſt endeavour to ingratiate vice to them; and then by their officious miniſteries in that, have a ready way of introducing themſelves into favour. Perhaps this will be thought to concern only the maſculine part of children,

and

and that the female, who are commonly in a diſtinct apartment, and converſe only with their own ſex, are more ſecure. But I would not adviſe mothers to depend too much on that, for they are no ſurer that their daughters ſhall not converſe with men, nay men of the meaner ſort too, than that their maids and attendants ſhall not do ſo. And when it is conſidered how apt thoſe are to entertain, if not to invite amours, it is not very probable the room where they quarter ſhall be inacceſſible to thoſe they affect. And it were much ſafer for children to be in the moſt public concourſe of men, than to be witneſſes and obſervers of the private intrigues of ſuch lovers. The memories of youth are very tenacious, and if they once be tainted with any indecent thing, will be apt to recollect it. It is therefore in this reſpect a very uſeful part of the mother's care, to make herſelf company to her daughter to prevent the dangers of a more unequal and infectious converſe.

42. But if this be uſeful in childhood, it is no leſs neceſſary in the next period of their time, when they arrive near the growth and age of women. Then indeed the mother ſhould not only make them her companions,

but

but her friends; allow ſuch a kind, yet modeſt freedom, that they may have a complacence in her company, and not be tempted to ſeek it among their inferiors. That the belief of her kindneſs may ſupplant the pretenſions of thoſe meaner ſycophants, who by little flatteries endeavour to ſcrew themſelves into their good opinion, and become their confidents: than which there is nothing more miſchievous. Thoſe private cabals that are held with ſuch, ſerving only to render them mutinous againſt their parents. Theſe family-incendiaries, like thoſe in the ſtate and church, ſtill inculcating the one grand principle of liberty, a word ſo charming to our depraved nature, and eſpecially to youth, that they ſhould not be truſted with ſuch lectures. Beſides thoſe intimacies are often introductions to worſe; many ſcandalous amours and unequal matches having had their riſe from them. It ſhould therefore be the buſineſs of mothers to prevent all ſuch pernicious leagues, by pre-engaging them in more ſafe familiarities, either with herſelf, or ſome other, of whoſe virtue ſhe has reaſon to be confident.

43. But the moſt infallible ſecurity againſt this and all other miſchiefs, is the bringing them

them into an intimacy and converſation with their Maker, by fixing a true ſenſe of religion in their hearts; if that can be effectually done, it will ſuperſede all other expedients. She that duly conſiders ſhe is always in God's preſence, will want no other inſpector, nor will ſhe much need monitors, who attends to the advices of her own conſcience. Neither will it only tend to the ſecuring her innocence, but her reputation too; it being one part of the chriſtian law, *to abſtain from all appearance of evil*, 1 Theſſ. v. 22. *to do things that are of good report*, Phil. iv. 8. ſo that piety is the one complete armour to defend both their virtue and fame. And it is extremely neceſſary they ſhould be furniſhed with it, at this age eſpecially, when they do at firſt enter into the world; which we may well look on as a taking the field, conſidering how many aſſaults they are there like to meet with; and if they go without this armature, they may, none knows how ſoon, be incurably wounded: of which there want not many ſad inſtances, ſome whereof might probably have been prevented, had the parent taken care to have better fortified them.

44. And

44. And indeed it is not a little ſad to ſee how much this their moſt important concern is neglected. Many mothers, who are nicely curious in other parts of their daughters breeding, are utterly inconſiderate of this. They muſt have all civil accompliſhments, but no chriſtian. Thoſe are excluded out of the ſcheme of education, and by that means lie under the prejudice of being not only unneceſſary, but ungenteel, below the regard of perſons of quality. It is much to be feared, that this neglect towards their children, is founded in a previous contempt of piety in themſelves; yet I ſuppoſe it is often increaſed by a little vanity they have of ſeeing them excel in ſome of thoſe exterior qualities, which may recommend them to the humour of the world, upon the improving whereof they are ſo intent, that more material things are overlooked: and when thoſe are acquired, the pride of ſhewing them betrays them to other inconveniencies. The mother often not only permits, but incites the daughter to the opportunities of boaſting her excellencies, ſends her ſo often abroad on that deſign, that at laſt perhaps ſhe cannot, when ſhe would, keep her at home, as I believe too many have found expe-

experimentally true. In a word, this interval between childhood and majority, is the moſt critical point of a woman's life, and therefore ſhould be the moſt nicely and warily attended; and a mother had need ſummon not only all her care and diligence, but her prudence too, well to diſcharge this part of her obligation.

45. I ſhall not inſiſt more minutely upon particulars: I have in the former ſection ſpoken ſomewhat of what it is fit theſe young virgins ſhould do and avoid; and whatever by that, or any more exact rule appears their intereſt or duty, it is the mother's to ſee it be not neglected by them: but where kindneſs alone will not prevail, to employ their authority too, and by a diſcreet mixture of each, ſecure their obſervance by both the tenures of love and reverence. Yet I ſhall a little reflect upon one particular I mentioned before, I mean that of marrying where they have averſion; which though I there charged as the crime of the daughter, yet I muſt here ſay the original and more inexcuſeable guilt is uſually in the parents; who are ſometimes ſuch idolaters to wealth and honor, that they ſacrifice their children to them; a more barbarous immolation than that to *Moloch*. For though that

that were very inhuman, yet it had this alleviation, that the pain was ſhort: but a loathed bed is at once an acute and lingering torment; nay, not only ſo, but a temptation too; ſo that it is a tyranny of a moſt unlimited kind, extends its effects even to eternity: and ſure that mother muſt have very petrified bowels, have loſt all natural compaſſion, that can ſo impoſe on her child.

46. I ſhall add no more concerning this relation of a mother, but only one ſhort advice, that thoſe who groan under the fruſtration of their hopes, whoſe children by any ſcandalous miſbehaviour become the objects of their ſhame and grief, would ſoberly conſider, whether it have not been ſome way owing to themſelves, either by neglect in their education, or by their own ill example. It is uſually one, and ſometimes both. They that upon recollection can aſſure themſelves it is neither, may bear the affliction with much the greater chearfulneſs; but they that cannot, I am ſure ought to bear it with much the more patience and ſubmiſſion, take it as God's lecture of repentance, and look on their childrens faults as the product of their own. And becauſe ſatisfaction is an indiſpenſable part of repentance,

ance, they are with their utmoſt induſtry to endeavour the repairing thoſe ruins they have made, by recalling thoſe to virtue, who by their means have ſtrayed from it. It is true, the errors of education, like a ſubtle poiſon, do ſo mix with the blood, ſo incorporate into the humours and manners, that it will be very difficult to allay their effects; and therefore the leſs they are themſelves able to do towards it, the more earneſtly they muſt importune an higher power. He who divided the light from the darkneſs, can ſeparate the effects from the cauſes; and as he reſtrained the natural property of fire in the caſe of the three children, *Dan.* iii. ſo he only can reſcue their children from that deſtruction to which their negligence has expoſed them. But as to the influence their examples have had, they may do ſomething towards the redreſs of that, by ſetting them a new *copy*, making their own change ſo viſible, ſo remarkable, that they may have the very ſame means of reclaiming, which there was of ſeducing them. And this is a piece of juſtice which ſeems to call aloud upon many mothers. The irregularities of youth could hardly have grown to the preſent height, had they not received warmth

and

and ſhelter from the practice of their elders, which does at once give encouragement and take off reſtraints, the mother loſing not only her authority, but her confidence to admoniſh or reprove. With what face can ſhe require that ſtrict and ſevere modeſty of a young girl, which ſhe who ſhould be a matron will not practice or tie up the giddy wandering humour of youth within thoſe bounds ſhe thinks too ſtrait for her own? and how ready a retortion will even ſcripture itſelf afford for ſuch an impoſer? *Thou that teacheſt another, teacheſt thou not thyſelf?* Rom. ii. 21. Let it therefore be the care of all mothers to live a perpetual lecture to their children, ſo to exemplify to them all virtue and piety, that they may contribute ſomething to their ſpiritual, as well as their natural life; that however they may at leaſt deliver their own ſouls, and not have their childrens guilt recoil upon them as the unhappy originals of it.

47. The laſt relation of a married woman is that of a miſtreſs, the inſpection of the family being uſually her province, and though ſhe be not ſupreme there, yet ſhe is to improve her delegated authority to the advantage

tage of all under it. And her more conſtant reſidence gives her more opportunities of it, than the frequent avocations of the huſband will perhaps allow him. St. *Paul* ſets it as the calling, and indiſpenſable duty of the married women, *That they guide the houſe*, 1 Tim. v. 18. not thinking it a point of greatneſs to remit the management of all domeſtic concerns to a mercenary houſekeeper. And indeed, ſince it has been a faſhionable thing for a maſter to reſign up his concerns to the ſteward, and the lady hers to the governante, it has gone ill with moſt great families; whilſt theſe officers ſerve themſelves inſtead of thoſe who employ them, raiſe fortunes on their patrons' ruins, and divide the ſpoil of the family; the houſekeeper pilfering within doors, and the bailiff plundering without.

48. Now to the well-guiding of the houſe by the miſtreſs of it, I know no better or more comprehenſive rule, than for her to endeavour to make all that are her's, to be God's ſervants alſo. This will ſecure her of all thoſe intermediate qualifications in them, in which her ſecular intereſt is concerned, their own conſciences being the beſt ſpy ſhe can ſet upon them as to their truth and fidelity, and the

beſt ſpur alſo to diligence and induſtry. But to the making them ſuch, there will need firſt inſtruction, and ſecondly diſcipline. It is a neceſſary part of the rulers' care to provide that none in their family ſhould want means of neceſſary inſtruction. I do not ſay that the miſtreſs ſhould ſet up for a catechiſt or preacher; but that they take order they ſhould be taught by thoſe that are qualified for the employment. And that their furniſhing them with knowledge, may not ſerve only to help them to a greater number of ſtripes, *Luke* xii. 47. they are to give them the opportunities of conſecrating it by prayer and devotion; to that end to have public divine offices in the family; and that not by ſtarts or accidents, when a devouter gueſt is to be entertained, and laid by, when a profane, but daily and regularly, that the hours of prayer may be fixed and conſtant as thoſe of meals, and if it may poſſibly be, as much frequented; however that towards it ſhe give both precept and example.

49. A chriſtian family ſhould be the epitome of a church; but alas! how many among us lie under a perpetual interdict: and yet not from the uſurpation of any foreign power, but from

from the irreligion of the domeſtic? One may go into divers great families, and, after ſome ſtay there, not be able to ſay that the name of God was mentioned to any other purpoſe than that of blaſphemy and execration; not a text of ſcripture, unleſs in burleſque and profane drollery. And ſure we need not wonder at the univerſal complaint that is now made of ill ſervants, when we reflect upon this ill government of families. They that are ſuffered wholly to forget their duty towards God, will not always remember it towards man. Servants are not ſuch philoſophers, that upon the bare ſtrength of a few moral inſtincts they will be virtuous: and if by a cuſtomary neglect of all things ſacred, they are once taught to look at nothing beyond this world, they will often find temptation enough here to diſcard their honeſty, as the moſt unthriving trade. And indeed when the awe of religion is quite taken off from the vulgar, there will ſcarce any thing elſe be found to keep them within any tolerable bounds; ſo that it is no leſs impolitic than profane to ſlacken that rein.

50. But it is not only the intereſt, but the duty of all that have families, to keep up the

eſteem and practice of religion in them. It was one of the greateſt endearments of *Abraham* to God, *That he would command his houſehold to keep the way of the Lord*, Gen. xviii. 19. And *Joſhua* undertakes no leſs for the piety of his houſehold, than him, *As for me and my houſe, we will ſerve the Lord*, Joſ. xxiv. 15. And ſure it is but reaſonable, that where we ourſelves owe an homage, we ſhould make all our dependants acknowledge the ſame. Beſides, it is a juſtice in reſpect of them; for where we entertain a ſervant, we take the whole perſon into our care and protection, and are falſe to that undertaking, if we ſuffer his ſoul, the moſt precious part of him to periſh. And God, who keeps account even of his meaneſt creatures, will not patiently allow ſuch a neglect of thoſe who bear his own image, and were ranſomed with as great a price as their maſters were, *for there is no reſpect of perſons with God*, Eph. vi. 9.

51. But when piety is planted in a family, it will ſoon wither, if it be not kept in vigor by diſcipline: nay, indeed to have ſervants ſeemingly devout in the oratory, and yet really licentious out of it, is but to convert one's houſe into a theatre, have a play of religion, and

and keep a ſet of actors only to perſonate and repreſent it. It is therefore neceſſary to enquire how they behave themſelves when they are off the ſtage; whether thoſe hands which they elevate in prayer, are at other times induſtriouſly applied to work; or thoſe mouths wherewith they there bleſs God, are not elſewhere filled with oaths and curſes, ſcurrilities and revilings: in a word, whether that form of godlineſs be not deſigned in commutation for ſobriety and honeſty. Indeed the governors of families ought to make a ſtrict inſpection into the manners of their ſervants, and where they find them good, to affix ſome ſpecial mark of favor, by which they may both be encouraged to perſevere, and others to begin; but where they find them vicious, there as eminently to diſcountenance, ſeverely to admoniſh them, and uſe all fit means for their reclaiming, and when that ſeems hopeleſs, to diſmiſs them that they may not infect the reſt. A little *leaven*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *leaveneth the whole lump*, Gal. v. 9. and one ill ſervant (like a periſhed tooth) will be apt to corrupt his fellows. It is therefore the ſame in families that it is in moſt public communities, where ſeverity to the ill is mercy and protection to

the reſt; and were houſes thus early weeded of all idle and vicious perſons, they would not be ſo over-grown, nor degenerate into ſuch rude wilderneſſes, as many (nay I fear moſt) great families now are.

52. But as ſervants are not to be tolerated in the neglect of their duty, ſo neither are they to be defeated of any of their dues. Maſters are to give to their ſervants that which is *juſt and equal*, Col. iv. 1. And ſure it is but juſt and equal that they who are rational creatures ſhould not be treated with the rigor or contempt of brutes: a ſufficient and decent proviſion, both in ſickneſs and in health, is a juſt debt to them, beſides an exact performance of thoſe particular contracts upon which they were entertained. *Laban* had ſo much of natural juſtice, that he would not take the advantage of *Jacob*'s relation to him to make him ſerve him *gratis*, *Becauſe thou art my brother ſhouldeſt thou therefore ſerve me for nought? tell me therefore what ſhall thy wages be*, Gen. xxix. 15. But alas! now a-days where ſervants have been told, nay expreſsly articled for their wages, it is with many no eaſy thing to get it: nay it is thought by ſome maſters an inſolence, a piece of ill manners to demand it; and

and when they have worn out a ſervant, they either pay him not at all, or with the ſame protraction and regret, which they do their taylors for the old cloaths they have caſt off. I fear there are many inſtances of this, eſpecially among great perſons; it being a received mode with too many of them to pay no debts to thoſe who are too mean to conteſt with them. But however they may ruffle it out with men, it will one day arraign them before God as moſt injurious oppreſſors; there being no crime of that kind more frequently or more ſeverely branded in Scripture, than this of the detention of the wages of the ſervant and hireling. Beſides, this example of injuſtice, wherein the ſervant is paſſive, is often tranſcribed by him in acts of fraud and deceit, and he is apt to think it but an equal retaliation, to break his truſt where the maſter breaks his covenant; and when he once attempts to be his own pay-maſter, it is not to be doubted but he will allow himſelf large uſe for the forbearance of his wages; ſo that the courſe is no leſs unprofitable to the maſter, than unjuſt and diſhonourable.

53. I am not ſure it is always in the wives power to prevent this, or any of the former

faults, in the management of the family. For her authority being but ſubordinate, if the huſband who is ſupreme ſuſpend her power, he does by that vacating her rule, take off the duty conſequent to it; ſo that what I have ſaid, can be obligatory to none that are ſo impeded. But to thoſe who can either do it themſelves, or perſuade their huſbands to it, the omiſſion will be their ſin: all the profaneneſs and diſorder of the family will be charged upon their account, if it came by their default.

54 And this, methinks, is a conſideration that may much mortify one uſual piece of vanity, I mean, that of a multitude of ſervants. We ſhall all of us find burthen enough of our own perſonal miſcarriages, and need not contrive to fetch in more weight from others. And in families it is generally obſervable, that the bigger they are, the worſe. Vice gains boldneſs by numbers, is hatched up by the warmth of a full ſociety; and we daily ſee people venture upon thoſe enormities in conſort, and in a crowd, which they would not dare, did they think they ſtood ſingle. Beſides, the wider the province is, the more difficult it is well to adminiſter it; and in a heap

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of ſervants many faults will eſcape undiſcerned: eſpecially conſidering the common confederacy there is uſually among them, for the eluding of diſcipline: ſo that what the wiſe man ſpeaks of not deſiring a multitude of unprofitable children, I think may be very well applied to ſervants, whoſe unprofitableneſs uſually increaſes together with their number. I have now run through the ſeveral obligations conſequent to the married ſtate, wherein even upon this very curſory view, there appear ſo many particulars, that if they were all duly attended, ladies need not be much at a loſs how to entertain themſelves, nor run abroad in a *romantic* queſt after foreign divertiſements, when they have ſuch variety of engagements at home.

SECT.

SECT III.

OF WIDOWS.

1. THE next ſtate which can ſucceed to that of marriage, is widow-hood, which though it ſuperſedes thoſe duties which be terminated merely in the perſon of the huſband, yet it endears thoſe which may be paid to his aſhes, *love is ſtrong as death*, Cant. viii. 6. and therefore when it is pure and genuine, cannot be extinguiſhed by it, but burns like the funeral lamps of old even in vaults and charnel-houſes. The conjugal love tranſplanted into the grave, as into a finer mold, improves into piety, and lays a kind of ſacred obligation upon the widow, to perform all offices of reſpect and kindneſs which his remains are capable of.

2. Now thoſe remains are of three ſorts, his body, his memory, and his children. The moſt proper expreſſion of her love to the firſt, is in giving it an honourable interment; I mean not ſuch as may vie with the *Poland* extravagance, of which it is obſerved, that two

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or three near ſucceeding funerals ruin the family, but prudently proportioned to his quality and fortune, ſo that her zeal to his corpſe may not injure a nobler relic of him, his children. And this decency is a much better inſtance of her kindneſs, than all thoſe tragical furies wherewith ſome women ſeem tranſported towards their dead huſbands, thoſe frantic embraces and careſſes of a carcaſs, which betray a little too much the ſenſuality of their love. And it is ſomething obſervable, that thoſe vehement paſſions quickly exhauſt themſelves, and by a kind of ſympathetic efficacy, as the body on which their affection was fixed, molders, ſo does that alſo; nay often it attends not thoſe leiſurely degrees of diſſolution, but by a more precipitate motion, ſeems rather to vaniſh than conſume.

3. The more valuable kindneſs therefore, is that to his memory, endeavouring to embalm that, keep it from periſhing; and by this innocent magic, as the *Egyptians* were wont by a more guilty, ſhe may converſe with the dead, repreſent him ſo to her own thoughts; that his life may ſtill be repeated to her; and as in a broken mirror the refraction multiplies the images, ſo by his diſſolution, every hour pre-

preſents diſtinct ideas of him; ſo that ſhe ſees him the oftener, for his being hid from her eyes. But as they uſe not to embalm without odours, ſo ſhe is not only to preſerve, but perfume his memory, render it as fragrant as ſhe can, not only to herſelf, but others; by reviving the remembrance of whatever was praiſe worthy in him, vindicating him from all calumnies and falſe accuſations, and ſtifling, or allaying, even true ones as much as ſhe can. And indeed a widow can no way better provide for her own honour, than by this tenderneſs of her huſband's.

4. Yet there is another expreſſion of it, inferior to none of the former, and that is the ſetting ſuch a value upon her relation to him, as to do nothing unworthy of it. It was the dying charge of *Auguſtus* to his wife *Livia*, *Behave thyſelf well, and remember our marriage.* And ſhe who has been wife to a perſon of honour, muſt ſo remember it, as not to do any thing below herſelf, or which he, could he have foreſeen it, ſhould juſtly have been aſhamed of.

5. The laſt tribute ſhe can pay him, is in his children. Theſe he leaves as his proxies to receive the kindneſs of which himſelf is incap-

capable; ſo that the children of a widow may claim a double portion of the mother's love; one upon their native right, as her's; the other, as a bequeſt in right of their dead father. And, indeed, ſince ſhe is to ſupply the place of both parents, it is but neceſſary ſhe ſhould put on the affections of both, and to the tenderneſs of a mother, add the care and conduct of a father. Firſt, in a ſedulous care of their education: and next, in a prudent management of their fortunes, an order that is ſometimes unhappily inverted, and mothers are ſo concerned to have the eſtate proſper in their tuition, that the children cannot; whilſt, by an unſeaſonable frugality, to ſave a little expence, they deny them the advantages of an ingenuous and genteel breeding; ſwell their eſtates perhaps to a vaſt bulk, but ſo contract and narrow their minds, that they know not how to diſpoſe them to any real benefit of themſelves or others. And this is one of the moſt pernicious parſimonies imaginable. A mother by this ſeems to adopt the fortune, and abdicate the child, who is only made the beaſt to bear thoſe loads of wealth ſhe will lay on, and which ſhe evidently owns as the great-

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eſt treaſure, ſince in tenderneſs to that ſhe neglects him.

6. Yet ſometimes the ſame effect ſprings from another cauſe, and children are ill bred, not becauſe the mother grudges the charge, but out of a feminine fondneſs, which permits her not to part with them to the proper places for their education. Like *Jacob* to *Benjamin*, her ſoul is ſo bound up in them, that ſhe cannot lend them a while even to their own moſt neceſſary concerns. And this, though not ſo ignoble a motive as the other, is of no leſs miſchief, at leaſt to her ſons, who being by it confined to home, are conſequently condemned to be poiſoned, if with nothing elſe, yet with the flatteries of ſervants and tenants, who think thoſe the beſt expedient to ſecure their own ſtation. And with theſe the young maſter or landlord is ſo blown up, that, as if his manors were the confines of the world, he can look at nothing beyond them; ſo that when at laſt he breaks looſe from his mother's arms and comes abroad, he expects ſcarce to find his equals, much leſs his betters; thinks he is ſtill to receive the ſame fawning adorations which he was uſed to at home: and being poſſeſt with this inſolent expectation, he will

will ſcarce be undeceived, but at the price of many affronts: nay, perhaps, he may buy his experience with the loſs of his life; by his ill manners draw on a quarrel, wherein he finally periſhes. That this is no impoſſible ſuppoſition, ſome unhappy mothers have found to their unſpeakable affliction.

7. It is not to be denied, but there are alſo dangers conſequent to the breeding children abroad, vice having inſinuated itſelf even into the places of erudition, and having not only as many, but the very ſame academies with virtue and learning, ſo that the extreme depravation of the times new-ſtates the queſtion, and we are not to conſider which is beſt, but which is the leaſt ill-diſpoſure of children. And in that competition ſure the home-education will be caſt; for there they may ſuck in all the venom, and nothing of the antidote, they will not only be taught baſe things, but as I before obſerved, by the baſeſt tutors, ſuch as will add all the moſt ſordid circumſtances to the improving of a crime. Whereas abroad, they are, firſt, not like to meet with any whoſe intereſt it is ſo much to make them vicious; and, ſecondly, they may, as ill as the world is, meet with many who may give them both

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precepts and examples of a better kind. Beſides, the diſcipline uſed in thoſe communities make them know themſelves; and the various ſorts of learning they may acquire, will not only prove uſeful divertiſement, the want of which is the great ſpring of miſchief, but will, if rightly applied, furniſh them with ingenuous and virtuous principles, ſuch as may ſet them above all vile and ignoble practices. So that there ſeems a conſpiration of motives to wreſt the child from the reluctting mother, and to perſuade her for a while to deny herſelf that deſire of her eyes, that ſo he may at laſt anſwer the more rational deſire of her heart.

8. As to the other part of her obligation, the managing of their fortune, there is the ſame rule for her as for all other perſons that have a truſt, viz. to do as for themſelves, that is, with the ſame care and diligence, if not a greater, as in her own peculiar concern. I do not ſay that ſhe ſhall confound the property, and make it indeed her own, by applying it to her peculiar uſe, a thing I fear which is often done, eſpecially by the gayer ſort of widows, who, to keep up their own equipage, do ſometimes encroach upon their ſons peculiar.

liar. And I wiſh even that, though bad enough, were the only caſe wherein it were done: but it is ſometimes to make her a better prize to a ſecond huſband. She goes into another family, and as if ſhe were a colony ſent out by her ſon he muſt pay for the planting her there: indeed the often repeating this injury, has advanced it now into a cuſtom, and the management of the minor's eſtate is reckoned on as part of the widow's fortune. But, I confeſs, I ſee not what there is in the title of a mother, that can legitimate her defrauding her child; it rather envenoms the crime, and adds unnaturalneſs to deceit. Beſides, it is a prepoſterous ſort of guilt. Orphans and widows are in ſcripture linked together as objects of God's and good men's pity, and of ill men's oppreſſion; and how ill, alas! does civil war look among fellow-ſufferers? The widow to injure the orphan is like the uncouth oppreſſion *Solomon* ſpeaks of, *Prov.* xxviii. 3. *A poor man that oppreſſeth the poor is like a ſweeping rain which leaveth no food.* Such kind of rapines are as exceſſive in their degrees, as prodigious in their kind: and I believe there are many inſtances of ſons, who have ſuffered more by the guardianſhip of their

mothers, than they could probably have done by the outrages of ſtrangers.

9. How well ſuch mothers anſwer their obligations to their dead huſbands, I muſt leave it to their own conſciences to diſcuſs; I ſhall only offer them theſe ſteps of gradation by which to proceed. Firſt, that injuſtice of any ſort is a great ſin. Secondly, that when it is in a matter of truſt, it is complicated with treachery alſo. Thirdly, that of all truſts thoſe to the dead have always been eſteemed the moſt ſacred. If they can find any allay to theſe by the two remaining circumſtances, that it is the truſt of a huſband, and the intereſt of a child, I ſhall confeſs them very ſubtle caſuiſts.

10. I have hitherto ſpoken of what the widow owes to her dead huſband; but there is alſo ſomewhat of peculiar obligation in relation to herſelf. God who has placed us in this world to purſue the intereſts of a better, directs all the ſignal acts of his providence to that end, and intends we ſhould ſo interpret them. So that every great change that occurs, is deſigned either to recal us from a wrong way, or to quicken our paces in the right; and a widow may more than conjecture, that when

when God takes away the mate of her boſom, reduces her to a ſolitude, he does by it ſound a retreat from the lighter jollities and gaieties of the world. And as in compliance with civil cuſtom ſhe immures herſelf, ſits in darkneſs for a while; ſo ſhe ſhould put on a more retired temper of mind, a more ſtrict and ſevere behaviour: and that not to be caſt off with her veil, but to be the conſtant dreſs of her widowhood. Indeed that ſtate as it requires a great ſobriety and piety, ſo it affords many advantages towards it. The apoſtle tells us, *that ſhe who is married careth for the things of the world, how ſhe may pleaſe her huſband,* 1 Cor. vii. 34. There are many things which are but the due compliances of a wife, which yet are great avocations, and interruptions of a ſtrict devotion; when ſhe is manumitted from that ſubjection, when ſhe has leſs of *Martha's care of ſerving*, ſhe is then at liberty to chuſe *Mary's part*, Luke x. 42. ſhe has her time and her fortune at her own command, and conſequently may much more abound in the works both of piety and charity. We find God himſelf retrenched the wife's power of binding her own ſoul, *Num.* xxx. her vows were totally inſignificant without her huſband's confirma-

tion; but the widow might devote herſelf to what degree ſhe pleaſed: her piety has no reſtraint from any other inconſiſtent obligation, but may ſwell as high as it can. Thoſe hours which were before her huſband's right, ſeem now to devolve on God the grand proprietor of our time: that diſcourſe and free converſe wherewith ſhe entertained him, ſhe may now convert into colloquies and ſpiritual intercourſe with her Maker; and that love which was only human before, by the change of its object acquires a ſublimity, is exalted into divine: from loyal duty and conjugal affection, becomes the eternal work and happineſs of angels, the ardor of a cherubim. Thus may ſhe in a higher ſenſe verify *Samſon's* riddle, *Judg.* xiv. 14. *fetch honey out of a carcaſs*, make her huſband's aſhes, like thoſe of the heifer under the law, *Heb.* ix. 13. *her purification:* his corruption may help her to put on incorruption, and her loſs of a temporary comfort may inſtate her in an eternal.

11. And as herſelf, ſo her fortune may alſo be conſecrated: and indeed if ſhe be, that will alſo: if ſhe have made an eſcape out of *Egypt*, *there ſhall not a hoof be left behind* her, *Exod.* x. 26. no part of her poſſeſſions will be aſſigned

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to vanity and excefs. She who hath really devoted herfelf to piety, *faſted and prayed* with *Anna*, Luke ii. 37. will alſo be *full of good words and alms-deeds* with *Tabitha*, Acts ix. 36. Thus ſhe may be a mother when ſhe ceaſes to bear; and, though ſhe no more increaſe one family, ſhe may ſupport many. And certainly the fertility of the womb is not ſo valuable as this of the bowels: fruitfulneſs can be but an happineſs, compaſſion is a virtue. Nay, indeed, it is a greater and more certain happineſs: a child is not brought forth but with pangs and anguiſh, but a work of mercy is produced not only with eaſe, but delight. Beſides, ſhe that bears a child, knows not whether it may prove a bleſſing or a curſe; but charity gives a certain title to a bleſſing, and engages the moſt ſolvent pay-maſter, even God himſelf, who owns all ſuch diſburſements as a loan to him. *He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord: and that which he hath given, will he pay him again*, Prov. xix. 17.

12. There was in the primitive times an eccleſiaſtical order of widows, which St. *Paul* mentions, 1 Tim. v. whoſe whole miniſtry was devoted to charity. They were indeed of

the poorer ſort, fit rather to receive than give alms; yet the leſs they could do with their purſes, the more was required of their perſons, the humbler offices of *waſhing the ſaints feet*, the careful taſk of *bringing up children*, and a diligent *attendance on every good work*. And ſure there is parity of reaſon, that thoſe who, upon the ſcore of their wealth, exempt themſelves from thoſe laborious ſervices, ſhould commute for it by more liberal alms. In the warmth and zeal of chriſtianity, women of the higheſt quality performed both ſorts of charity, forgot their greatneſs in their condeſcenſions, yet aſſumed it again in their bounty; founded hoſpitals, and yet, with a *labour of love*, as the Apoſtle ſtiles it, *Heb.* vi. 10. diſdained not ſometimes to ſerve in them. But theſe are examples not like to be tranſcribed in our days; greatneſs is now grown to ſuch an unwieldineſs that it cannot ſtoop though to the moſt chriſtian offices, and yet can as little ſoar up in any munificent charities: it ſtands like *Nebuchadnezzar*'s golden image, a vaſt bulk only to be adored.

13. Now certainly, if any women be qualified to avert this reproach, it muſt be the dowagers of great families and fortunes: they have

have none to controul their viſits to the ſick and afflicted, or to reſent a diſparagement from their humility, neither have they an account to give of their poſſeſſions to any but God and themſelves. To him ſure they can bring none ſo like to procure them the eulogy of *well done thou good and faithful ſervant*, Matth. xxv. 21. as a catalogue of their alms. Nor indeed can they any other way diſpoſe their fortunes ſo much to their own contentment; they may poſſibly cloy and ſatiate their ſenſes, make proviſion for the fleſh; but that no way ſatisfies their reaſon, much leſs their conſcience. The ſoul, which is the ſuperior part, is quite left out in that diſtribution; nothing is communicated to it but the guilt of thoſe dear bought exceſſes. The only way it has to be a ſharer in their wealth, is by a charitable diſpenſing. The poor are its proxies as well as God's, and though in all other reſpects we may ſay to the ſoul, as the *Pſalmiſt* does to God, *Pſal.* xvi. 2. *my goods extend not to thee:* yet by this way, it becomes not only a partaker, but the chief proprietor, and all is laid out for its uſe. The harbouring an outcaſt, builds it *an everlaſting habitation*, *Luke* xvi. 9.

the clothing the naked, arrays it in *pure white linen*, Rev. xix. 8. and the feeding the hungry, makes it a gueſt *at the ſupper of the Lamb*, ver. 9. Nay, it gains not only an indefeaſible title to theſe happy reverſions, but it has a great deal in preſent poſſeſſion, a huge rational complacency in the right applying of wealth, and doing that with it, for which it was deſigned. Yet more, it gives a ſenſitive delight, nothing being more agreeable to human nature, than the doing good to its own kind. A ſeaſonable alms leaves a greater exultation and tranſport in the giver, than it can ordinarily raiſe in the receiver; ſo exemplifying the maxim of our bleſſed Lord, that it is a *more bleſſed thing to give than to receive*, Acts xx. 35. This indeed is a way to elude the ſevere denunciation of the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* v. 6. *A widow that liveth in* this *pleaſure, is* not *dead whilſt ſhe liveth*, but on the contrary, ſhall live when ſhe dies; when ſhe reſigns her breath, ſhall improve her being: the prayers of the poor, like a benign gale, ſhall aſſiſt her flight to the region of bliſs; and ſhe who has here cheriſhed the afflicted members, ſhall there be indiſſolubly united to their glorious head.

14. And

14. And now methinks widowhood, under this aſpect, is quite transformed, is not ſo forlorn, ſo deſolate an eſtate as it is uſually eſteemed. And would all widows uſe but this expedient, thus devote themſelves to piety and charity, it would, like the healing tree, *Exod.* xv. 25. ſweeten theſe waters of *Marah*, render the condition not only ſupportable, but pleaſant; and they would not need to make ſuch affrighted, ſuch diſadvantageous eſcapes, as many do, from it. It is true, the Apoſtle's affirmation is unqueſtionable, that *the wife, when her huſband is dead is at liberty to be married to whom ſhe will*, 1 Cor. vii. 39. But the advice he ſubjoins is authentic too, *ſhe is happier if ſhe ſo abide.* She that may ſolace herſelf in the ſociety, in the love of her God, makes an ignoble deſcent to human embraces; ſhe that may purchaſe heaven with her wealth, buys a very dear bargain of the beſt huſband on earth. Nay indeed upon a mere ſecular account, it ſeems not very prudent to relinquiſh both liberty and property, to eſpouſe at the beſt a ſubjection, but perhaps a ſlavery; it a little reſembles the mad frolicks of freed gally-ſlaves, who play away their liberty as ſoon as they regain it.

15. Marriage

15. Marriage is ſo great an adventure, that once ſeems enough for the whole life: for whether they have been proſperous or adverſe in the firſt, it does almoſt diſcourage a ſecond attempt. She that has had a good huſband, may be ſuppoſed to have his idea ſo fixed in her heart, that it will be hard to introduce any new form: nay, farther, ſhe may very reaſonably doubt, that in this common dearth of virtue, two good huſbands will ſcarce fall to one woman's ſhare, and one will become more intolerable to her, by the reflections ſhe will be apt to make on the better. On the other ſide, if ſhe have had a bad, the ſmart ſure cannot but remain after the rod is taken off; the memory of what ſhe has ſuffered ſhould, methinks, be a competent caution againſt new adventures. Yet experience ſhews us that women, though the weaker ſex, have commonly fortitude enough to encounter and baffle all theſe conſiderations. It is not therefore to be expected that many will by any thing that hath or can be ſaid be diverted from re-marrying: and indeed ſhe that does not preſerve her widowhood upon the accounts beforementioned, may perhaps better relinquiſh it. St. *Paul* we ſee adviſes that thoſe *widows* who

who found no better employment *than going from house to house*, that grew by their vacancy to *be tatlers and busy bodies*, 1 Tim. v. 13. should marry again, it being the best way to fix these wandering planets, to find them business of their own at home, that so they may not ramble abroad to intermeddle with that of others. And the truth is, they that cannot brook the retiredness and gravity which becomes a widow, had better put themselves in a state that less requires it, and if they resolve not to conform their minds to their condition, to bring their condition to their minds. But in the doing that, there will be some cautions very necessary to be observed. I shall reduce them to two, the one relating to the time, the other to the equality of the match.

16. First in respect of time, common decency requires that there be a considerable interval between the parting with one husband, and the chusing another. This has been so much observed by nations that were at all civilized, that we find *Numa* made it a law, that no widow should marry under ten months, and if any did she was to sacrifice, as for the expiation of a crime. And this continued in force many ages after, insomuch that when upon

upon reaſons of ſtate *Auguſtus* found it uſeful to marry his ſiſter *Octavia* to *Antonius*, nothing leſs than a decree of the ſenate could licence the anticipating of the time; ſo jealous obſervers were they of this point of civility, that they thought the whole ſtate was concerned in the violation. It is true we have no law in the caſe, but we have ſomewhat of cuſtom: I know not how long we ſhall have, ſince the frequent breaches of it threaten quite to cancel it: yet a woman that is tender of her honour will ſcarce give her example towards the reſcinding it. The wounds of grief are ſeldom healed by any hand but that of time, and therefore too ſudden a cure ſhews the hurt pierced not deep; and ſhe that can make her mourning veil an optic to draw a new lover nearer to her ſight, gives cauſe to ſuſpect the fables were all without.

17. The next thing conſiderable is the equality of the match. Marriage is ſo cloſe a link, that to have it eaſy, it is good to have the parties as even proportioned as may be. And firſt in reſpect of quality and fortune; it is to be wiſhed there ſhould be no eminent diſproportion. Thoſe that meet moſt upon a level, are leaſt ſubject to thoſe upbraidings

that

that often attend a great deſcent of either party. It is therefore no prudent motive, by which ſome widows are ſwayed who marry only for a great title; who often do not meet with ſo much of obeiſance from ſtrangers, as they do with contempt from their huſbands and his relations. There have been examples of lords, who have ſued rich, but inferior widows like ſpunges, ſqueezed them to fill themſelves with their wealth, and endowed them only with the air of a big name. On the other ſide for a woman to marry very meanly, and too much below herſelf, is rather worſe; thoſe kind of matches are ordinarily made in a tranſport of paſſion, and when that abates and leaves her to ſober reflections, ſhe will probably be ſo angry with herſelf, that ſhe will ſcarce be well pleaſed with her huſband. A ſtate of ſubjection is a little ſweetened by the worth and dignity of the ruler: for as it is more honorable, ſo it is alſo more eaſy, the ſerviler ſpirits being of all others the moſt imperious in command. And ſure it will not a little grate a woman of honor, to think ſhe has made ſuch an one her maſter, who perhaps would before have thought it a preferment to have been her ſervant. Nay farther,

ſuch

ſuch marriages have commonly an ill reflection on the modeſty of the woman, it being uſually preſum'd that where the diſtance was ſo great, as to diſcourage ſuch an attempt on his part, there was ſome invitation on hers. So that upon all accounts ſhe is very forlorn who thus diſpoſes of herſelf. Yet it is too well known ſuch matches have often been made, and the ſame levity and inconſideration may betray others to it; and therefore it is their concern well to baläſt their minds, and to provide that their paſſion never get the aſcendant over their reaſon.

18. Another very neceſſary equality is that of their judgment as to religion. I do not mean that they are to catechiſe each other, as to every minute ſpeculative point: but that they be of the ſame profeſſion, ſo as to join together in the worſhip of God. It is ſure very uncomfortable that thoſe who have ſo cloſely combined all their other intereſts, ſhould be diſunited in the greateſt; that one church cannot hold them, whom one houſe, one bed does; and that religion, which is in itſelf the moſt uniting thing, ſhould be the only diſagreement between them. I know it is often made a compact in ſuch matches, that

that neither ſhall impoſe their opinion upon the other: yet I doubt it is ſeldom kept, unleſs it be by thoſe whoſe careleſsneſs of all religion abates their zeal to any one. But where they have any earneſtneſs in their way, eſpecially where the one party thinks the other in a damnable error, it will ſcarce be poſſible to refrain endeavouring to reduce them; and that endeavour begets diſputes, thoſe diſputes heats, thoſe heats diſguſts, and thoſe diſguſts perhaps end in averſion; ſo that at laſt their affections grow as irreconcileable as their opinions, and their religious jars draw on domeſtic. Beſides, if none of theſe perſonal debates happen, yet the education of the children will be matter of diſpute, the one parent will ſtill be countermining the other, each ſeeking to recover the others proſelytes. Nay it introduces faction into the inferior parts of the family too: the ſervants according to their different perſuaſions bandy into leagues and parties; ſo that it endangers, if not utterly deſtroys all concord in families: and all this train of miſchiefs ſhould, methinks, be a competent prejudice againſt ſuch matches.

19. There is yet a third particular wherein any great diſproportion is much to be avoided, and that is in the years. The humours of youth

youth and age differ ſo widely, that there had need be a great deal of ſkill to compoſe the diſcord into a harmony. When a young woman marries an old man, there are commonly jealouſies on the one part, and loathings on the other, and if there be not an eminent degree of diſcretion in one or both, there will be perpetual diſagreements. But this is a caſe that does not often happen among thoſe I now ſpeak to: for though the avarice of parents ſometimes forces maids upon ſuch matches, yet widows who are their own chooſers ſeldom make ſuch elections. The inequality among them commonly falls on the other ſide, and old women marry young men. Indeed any marriage is in ſuch, a folly and dotage. They who muſt ſuddenly make their beds in the duſt, what ſhould they think of a nuptial couch? And to ſuch the anſwer of the philoſopher is appoſite, who being demanded what was the fitteſt time for marrying, replied, for the young not yet, for the old not at all.

20. But this dotage becomes perfect frenzy and madneſs when they chooſe young huſbands: this is an accumulation of abſurdities and contradictions. The huſband and the wife

wife are but one perſon; and yet at once young and old, freſh and withered. It is a reverſing the decrees of nature: and therefore it was no ill anſwer which *Dionyſius* the tyrant gave his mother, who in her age deſigned ſuch a match, that, though by his regal power he could diſpenſe with poſitive laws, yet he could not abrogate thoſe of nature, or make it fit for her an old woman to marry a young man. It is indeed an inverſion of ſeaſons, a confounding the kalendar, making a mongrel month of *May* and *December:* and the conjunction proves as fatal as it is prodigious; it being ſcarce ever ſeen that ſuch a match proves tolerably happy. And indeed it is not imaginable how it ſhould; for firſt it is to be preſumed that ſhe that marries ſo muſt marry meanly. No young man who does not need her fortune will take her perſon. For though ſome have the humour to give great rates for inanimate antiquities, yet none will take the living *gratis*. Next ſhe never miſſes to be hated by him ſhe marries: he looks on her as his rack and torment, thinks himſelf under the lingering torture deviſed by *Mezentius*, a living body tied to a dead. Nor muſt ſhe think to cure this by any the little adulteries of art: ſhe may buy beauty, and yet can

never make it her own; nay paint, yet never be fair. It is like enameling a mud-wall, the coarſeneſs of the ground will ſpoil the varniſh; and the greateſt exquiſiteneſs of dreſs ſerves but to illuſtrate her native blemiſhes. So that all ſhe gains by this is to make him ſcorn as well as abhor her.

21. Indeed there is nothing can be more ridiculous, than an old woman gaily ſet out; and it was not unaptly ſaid of *Diogenes* to ſuch an one, if this decking be for the living, you are deceived; if for the dead, make haſte to them: and I doubt many young huſbands will be ready to ſay as much. Nay, becauſe death comes not quick enough to part them, there are few have patience to attend its loitering pace: the man bids adieu to the wife though not to her fortune, takes that to maintain his luxuries elſewhere, allows her ſome little annuity, and makes her a penſioner to her own eſtate. So that he has his deſign, but ſhe none of hers; he married for her fortune and he has it; ſhe for his perſon and has it not: and which is worſe, buys her defeat with the loſs of all, he commonly leaving her as empty of money as he found her of wit.

22. And

22. And truly this is a condition deplorable enough, and yet uſually fails even of that comfort which is the laſt reſerve of the miſerable, I mean pity. It is the wiſe man's queſtion, *Eccluſ.* xii. 13. *Who will pity a charmer that is bitten with a ſerpent?* He might have preſumed leſs on his ſkill, and kept himſelf at a ſafer diſtance: and ſure the like may be ſaid of her. Alas! what are her feeble charms, that ſhe ſhould expect by them to fix the giddy appetites of youth? And ſince ſhe could ſo preſume without ſenſe, none will regret that ſhe ſhould be convinced by ſmart. Beſides, this is a caſe wherein there have been a multitude of unhappy precedents which might have cautioned her. He that accidentally falls down an undiſcovered precipice is compaſſionated for his diſaſter; but he that ſtands a great while on the brink of it, looks down and ſees the bottom ſtrewed with the mangled carcaſſes of many that have thence fallen; if he ſhall deliberately caſt himſelf into their company, the blame quite extinguiſhes the pity; he may aſtoniſh, but not melt the beholders. And truly ſhe who caſts herſelf away in ſuch a match, betrays not leſs, but more wilfulneſs. How many ruins of

unhappy women preſent themſelves to her, like the wrecks of old veſſels, all ſplit upon this rock? And if ſhe will needs ſteer her courſe purpoſely to the ſame, none ought to grudge her the ſhipwreck ſhe ſo courts.

23. Nor has ſhe only this negative diſcomfort, to be deprived of pity, but ſhe is loaded with cenſures and reproach. The world is apt enough to malicious errors, to fix blame where there is none, but it is ſeldom guilty of the charitable, does not overlook the ſmalleſt appearance of evil, but generally puts the worſt conſtruction on any act, that it will with any probability bear; and according to that meaſure, women in this condition can expect no very mild deſcants on them. Indeed ſuch matches are ſo deſtitute of any rational plea, that it is hard to derive them from any other motive than the ſenſitive. What the common conjectures are in that caſe, is as needleſs as it is unhandſome to declare: I will not ſay how true they are; but if they be, it adds another reaſon to the former, why ſuch marriages are ſo unproſperous. All diſtortions in nature are uſually ominous; and ſure ſuch preternatural heats in age, may very well be reckoned as diſmal preſages, and very certain

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ones too, ſince they create the ruin they foretell. And truly it is not only juſt, but convenient, that ſuch motives ſhould be attended with ſuch conſequences; that the bitterneſs of the one, may occaſion ſome reflexion on the ſordidneſs of the other. It is but kindly, that ſuch an *All-hallowtide* ſpring ſhould meet with froſts, and the unpleaſantneſs of the event chaſtiſe the uglineſs of the deſign; and therefore I think thoſe that are conſcious of the one, ſhould be ſo far from murmuring, that they ſhould be very thankful for the other, think it God's diſcipline to bring them again to their wits; and not repine at that ſmart which themſelves have made neceſſary.

24. And now I wiſh all the ancienter widows could ſeriouſly weigh how much it is their intereſt not to ſever thoſe two epithets; that of ancient they cannot put off, it daily grows upon them; and that of widow is ſure a more proportionable adjunct to it, than that of wife; eſpecially when it is to one to whom her age might have made her mother. There is a veneration due to age, if it be ſuch as diſowns not itſelf, *The hoary head*, ſays *Solomon*, *is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteouſneſs*, Prov. xvi. 31. but when it will

mix itſelf with youth, it is diſclaimed by both, becomes the ſhame of the old, and the ſcorn of the young. What a ſtrange fury is it then which poſſeſſes ſuch women, that when they may diſpoſe their fortunes to thoſe advantageous deſigns before mentioned, they ſhould only buy with them, ſo indecent, ſo ridiculous a ſlavery? that when they may keep up the reputation of modeſty and prudence, they ſhould expoſe themſelves to an univerſal contempt for the want of both? and that they who might have had a reverence, put themſelves even out of the capacity of bare compaſſion?

25. This is ſo high a frenzy, as ſure cannot happen in an inſtant; it muſt have ſome preparatory degrees, ſome rooting in the conſtitution and habit of the mind. Such widows have ſure ſome lightneſs of humour, before they can be ſo giddy in their brains, and therefore thoſe that will ſecure themſelves from the effect, muſt ſubſtract the cauſe; if they will ſtill be wiſhing themſelves young, it is odds but within a while they will perſuade themſelves they are ſo. Let them therefore content themſelves to be old, and as faſhions are varied with times, ſo let them put

put on the ornaments proper to their ſeaſon, which are piety, gravity, prudence. Theſe will not only be their ornament, but their armour too; this will gain them ſuch a reverence, that will make it as improbable they ſhould be aſſaulted, as impoſſible they ſhould aſſault. For I think one may ſafely ſay, it is the want of one or all of thoſe, which betrays women to ſuch marriages.

26. And indeed it may be a matter of caution, even to the younger widows, not to let themſelves too much looſe to a light frolic humour, which perhaps they will not be able to put off, when it is moſt neceſſary they ſhould. It will not much invite a ſober man to marry them while they are young; and if it continue with them till they are old, it may, as natural motions uſe, grow more violent towards its end: precipitate them into that ruinous folly we have before conſidered. Yet, ſhould they happen to eſcape that, ſhould it not force them from their widowhood, it will ſure very ill agree with it: for how prepoſterous is it for an old woman to delight in gauds and trifles, ſuch as were fitter to entertain her grandchildren? to read romances with ſpectacles, and be at maſks and dancings, when

ſhe is fit only to act the antiques? Theſe are contradictions to nature, the tearing off her marks; and where ſhe has writ fifty or ſixty, to leſſen, beyond the proportion of the unjuſt ſteward, and write ſixteen. And thoſe who thus manage their widowhood, have more reaſon to bewail it at laſt than at firſt, as having more experimentally found the miſchief of being left to their own guidance. It will therefore concern them all to put themſelves under a ſafer conduct by an aſſiduous devotion to render themſelves up to the leading of the one infallible guide, who if he be not a *covering of the eyes*, Gen. xx. 16. to preclude all ſecond choices, may yet be *a light to them* for diſcerning who are fit to be choſen; that if they ſee fit to uſe their liberty and marry, they may yet take the Apoſtle's reſtriction with it, 1 *Cor.* vii. 39. that *it be only in the Lord*, upon ſuch ſober motives, and with ſuch due circumſtances as may approve it to him, and render it capable of his benediction.

THE

THE CLOSE.

1. I HAVE now gone through both parts of the propoſed method. The former has preſented thoſe qualifications which are equally neceſſary to every woman. Theſe, as a root, ſend ſap and vigor to the diſtinct branches, animate and impregnate the ſeveral ſucceſſive ſtates through which ſhe is to paſs. He that hath pure ore or bullion, may caſt it into what form beſt fits his uſe, nay may tranſlate it from one to another; and ſhe who has that mine of virtues, may furniſh out any condition; her being good in an abſolute conſideration, will certainly make her ſo in a relative. On the other ſide, ſhe who has not ſuch a ſtock, cannot keep up the honour of any ſtate; like corrupted liquor, empty it from one veſſel to another, it ſtill infects and contaminates all. And this is the cauſe that women are alike complained of under all forms, becauſe ſo many want this fundamental virtue. Were there more good women, there would be more modeſt virgins, loyal and obedient wives, and ſober widows.

2. I muſt, therefore, intreat thoſe who will look on this tract, not only to ſingle out that

part

part which bears their own inſcription, but that they think themſelves no leſs concerned in that which relates indefinitely to their ſex; endeavour to poſſeſs themſelves of thoſe excellencies, which ſhould be as univerſal as their kind: and when they are ſo ſtored with matter, they may leave Providence to diverſify the ſhape, and to aſſign them their ſcene of action.

3. And now, would God it were as eaſy to perſuade, as it is to propoſe; and that this diſcourſe may not be taken only as a *gazette* for its newneſs, and diſcarded as ſoon as read; but that it may at leaſt advance to the honour of an almanac, be allowed one year ere it be out of date: and in that time, if frequently and ſeriouſly conſulted, it may perhaps awaken ſome ladies from their ſtupid dreams, convince them that they were ſent into the world for nobler purpoſes, than only to make a little glittering in it; like a comet, to give a blaze, and then diſappear. And truly, if it may operate but ſo far as to give them an affective ſenſe of that, I ſhall think it has done them a conſiderable ſervice. They may, I am ſure, from that principle deduce all neceſſary conſequences, and I wiſh they would but take the pains to draw the corollaries; for thoſe inductions they make to themſelves, would be much

much more efficacious than thoſe which are drawn to their hands. Propriety is a great endearment: we love to be proſelytes to ourſelves; and people often reſiſt others reaſons, who would upon mere partiality pay reverence to their own.

4. But beſides this, there would be another advantage, if they could be but got to a cuſtom of conſidering; by it they might inſenſibly undermine the grand inſtrument of their ruin. That careleſs incogitancy, ſo remarkably frequent among all, and not leaſt among perſons of quality, is the ſource of innumerable miſchiefs, it is the *Delilah*, that at once lulls and betrays them; it keeps them in a perpetual ſleep, binds up their faculties, ſo that, though they are not extinct, yet they become uſeleſs. *Plato* uſed to ſay, *That a man aſleep was good for nothing*: and it is certainly no leſs true of this moral drowſineſs than the natural. And as in ſleep the fancy only is in motion, ſo theſe inconſiderate perſons do rather dream than diſcourſe; entertain little trifling images of things which are preſented by their ſenſe, but know not how to converſe with their reaſon. So that in this drowſy ſtate, all temptations come on them with the ſame advantage,

tage, with that of a *thief in the night*; a phraſe by which the ſcripture expreſſes the moſt inevitable unforeſeen danger, 1 Theſ. v. 2. We read in *Judges*, how eaſily *Laiſh* became a prey to a handful of men, merely becauſe of this ſupine negligent humour of the inhabitants, which had cut them off from all intercourſe with any who might have ſuccoured them, *Jud.* xviii. 25, 28. And certainly it gives no leſs opportunity to our ſpiritual aſſailants, leaves us naked and unguarded to receive all their impreſſions. How prodigious a thing is it then, that this ſtate of dullneſs and danger ſhould be affectedly choſen? Yet we ſee it too often is; even by thoſe whoſe qualities and education fit them for more ingenuous elections; nay, which is yet more a riddle, that very aptneſs diſenables, ſets them above what it prepares them for. Labour is looked on as utterly incompatible with greatneſs, and conſideration is looked on as a labour of the mind; and there are ſome ladies who ſeem to reckon it as their prerogative, to be exempted from both; will no more apply their underſtandings to any ſerious diſcuſſion, than their hands to the ſpindle and diſtaff; the one they think pedantic, as the other is mean. In the mean

time,

time, by what ſtrange meaſures do they proceed? they look on idiots as the moſt deplorable of creatures, becauſe they want reaſon; and yet make it their own excellence and preeminence, to want the uſe of it; which is indeed ſo much worſe than to want the thing, as ſloth is worſe than poverty, a moral defect than a natural. But we may ſee by this, how much civil and ſacred eſtimates differ: for we find the *Bereans* commended, not only as more diligent, but as *more noble* too, Acts xvii. 11. becauſe they attentively *conſidered*, and ſtrictly examinded the *doctrine preached to them*. By which they may diſcern, that in God's court of honour, a ſtupid oſcitancy is no ennobling quality, however it comes to be thought ſo in theirs.

5. And if this one point might be gained, if they would but ſo far actuate their reaſon, as deliberately and duly to weigh their intereſt, they would find that ſo ſtrictly engaging them to all that is virtuous, that they muſt have a very invincible reſolution for ruin, if that cannot perſuade them. And I hope all women are not *Medeas*, whom the poet brings avowing the horridneſs of that fact, which yet ſhe reſolved to execute. They are generally rather

ther timorous, and apt to ſtart at the apprehenſion of danger; let them but ſee a ſerpent though at a great diſtance, they will need no homilies or lectures to be perſuaded to fly from it. And ſure, did they but clearly diſcern what a ſting there is in thoſe vicious follies they embrace, their fear would make them quit their hold, put them in ſuch a trembling, as would like that of *Belſhazzar*'s, ſlacken their joints, and make thoſe things drop from them, which before they moſt tenaciouſly graſped. For, indeed, in ſin there is a conſpiration of all that can be dreadful to a rational being, ſo that one may give its compendium by the very reverſe of that which the apoſtle gives of godlineſs, 1 *Tim.* iv. 8. for as the one *has the promiſes*, ſo the other has the curſes *of this life, and of that to come.*

6. In this life every depraved act, much more habit, has a black ſhadow attending it: it caſts one inward upon the conſcience in uncomfortable upbraidings and regrets. It is true, indeed, ſome have the art to diſguiſe that to themſelves by caſting a yet darker over it, ſuppreſſing all thoſe ſtrugglings by an induſtrious ſtupefaction, making their ſouls ſo perfect night, that they cannot ſee thoſe black images

images their conſciences repreſent. But as this renders their condition but the more wretched, ſo neither can they blind others though they do themſelves. Vice caſts a dark ſhadow outwards too, not ſuch as may conceal but betray itſelf: and as the evening ſhadows increaſe in dimenſion, grow to a monſtroſity and diſproportion, ſo the longer any ill habit is continued, the more viſible, the more deformed it appears, draws more obſervation and more cenſure.

7. It were indeed endleſs to reckon up the temporal evils to which it expoſes its votaries. Immodeſty deſtroys their fame, a vain prodigality their fortune, anger makes them mad, pride hateful, levity renders them deſpiſed, obſtinacy deſperate, and irreligion is a complication of all theſe, fills up their meaſure both of guilt and wretchedneſs. So that had virtue no other advocate, her very antagoniſt would plead for her: the miſerable conſequences of vice, would, like the flames of *Sodom*, ſend all conſidering perſons to that little *Zoar*, which, how deſpicable ſoever it may have appeared before, cannot but look invitingly, when ſafety is inſcribed on its gates.

8. But

8. But it muſt infinitely more do ſo if they pleaſe to open a *viſto* into the other world, make uſe of divine perſpectives to diſcern thoſe diſtant objects which their groſſer ſenſes do here intercept. There they may ſee the diſmal cataſtrophe of their comedies, the miſerable inverſion of all unlawful or unbounded pleaſures: there that prophetic menace concerning *Babylon* which we find, *Rev.* xviii. 7. will be literally verified upon every unhappy ſoul, *According as ſhe exalted herſelf and lived delicately, ſo much the more tribulation give her*; the torment of that life will bear proportion to the pride and luxuries of this. It will therefore be neceſſary for thoſe who here wallow in pleaſures, to confront to them the remembrance of thoſe rivers of brimſtone, and aſk themſelves the prophet's queſton, *Who can dwell with everlaſting burnings?* We find *Iſaiah*, when he denounces but temporal judgments againſt the daughters of *Zion*, exactly purſues the antitheſis, and to every part of their effeminate delicacy he oppoſes the direct contrary hardſhip, inſtead of *ſweet ſmells, there ſhall be a ſtink; inſtead of a girdle, a rent; inſtead of a well ſet hair, baldneſs; inſtead of a ſtomacher, a girding*

ing with ſackcloth; and burning inſtead of beauty. Iſaiah iii. 24.

9. It were well the daughters of our Zion would copy out this lecture, and prudently foreſee how every particular ſin or vanity of theirs will have its adapted puniſhment in another world. And ſure this conſideration well digeſted, muſt needs be a forcible expedient to cleanſe them from all *filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit*, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, 2 Cor. vii. 1. For is it poſſible for her to cheriſh and blow up her libidinous flames here, who conſiders them but as the firſt kindlings of thoſe inextinguiſhable ones hereafter? Can ſhe make it her ſtudy to pleaſe her appetite, that remembers that *Dives*'s unintermitted feaſt ends in as unallayed a thirſt? Or can ſhe deny the crumbs of her table to that *Lazarus*, to whom ſhe foreſees ſhe ſhall then ſupplicate for a drop of water? In fine, can ſhe lay out her whole induſtry, her fortune, nay her ingenuity too, in making proviſion for the fleſh, who conſiders that that fleſh will more corrupt by pampering, and breed the worm that never dies? Certainly no woman can be ſo deſperately daring, as thus to attack damnation, reſiſt her reaſon and her ſenſe, only that ſhe may ruin her ſoul; and

unleſs ſhe can do all this, her foreſight will prove her eſcape, and her viewing the bottomleſs pit in landſkip and picture, will ſecure her from a real deſcent into it.

10. But now that this tract may not make its *exit* in the ſhape of a fury, bring the meditations to hell and there leave them, it muſt now at laſt ſhift the ſcene, and as it has ſhewed the blackneſs of vice by that outer-darkneſs to which it leads, we alſo will let in a beam of the celeſtial light to diſcover the beauty of virtue; remind the reader that there is a region of joy as well as a place of torment, and piety and virtue is that milky way that leads to it; a ſtate, compared to which the *Elyſium* of the heathen is as inconſiderable as it is fictitious, the *Mahometan paradiſe* as flat and inſipid as it is groſs and brutiſh; where the undertaking of the *Pſalmiſt* ſhall be completely anſwered, thoſe *that fear the Lord ſhall want no manner of thing that is good*, Pſalm xxxiv. 10. And this happy ſtate is as acceſſible as excellent. God is not unſincere in his propoſals, offers not theſe glories only to tantalize and abuſe us, but to animate and encourage mankind. He ſets up an inviting prize; and not only marks out, but levels the way to it; makes that our

duty which is alſo our pleaſure, yea and our honour too. So has he contrived for our eaſe, that knowing how hardly we can diveſt our voluptuouſneſs and ambition, he puts us not to it: all he demands is but that he may chooſe the object. And in that he is yet more obliging, for by that at once he refines and ſatisfies the deſires. He takes us off, indeed, from the fulſome pleaſures of ſenſe, which by their groſſneſs may cloy, yet by reaſon of their emptineſs can never fill us; and brings us to taſte the more pure ſpiritual delights which are the true elixirs of pleaſures, in compariſon whereof all the ſenſual are but as the dregs or *feces* in an extraction, after the ſpirits are drawn off. In like manner he calls us from an aſpiring to thoſe pinacles of honour, where we always ſit tottering and often fall down, but yet invites us to ſoar higher, where we ſhall have the *Moon* with all her viciſſitudes, and changes *under our feet*, Rev. xii. 1. and enjoy a grandeur as irreverſible as ſplendid.

11. Thus does he ſhew us a way to hallow our moſt unſanctified affections; thus, according to the propheſy of Zechariah, *may holineſs be writ even upon the bells of the horſes*, Zech.

xiv. 20. upon our moſt brutal inclinations; and thus may all thoſe feminine paſſions, which now ſeduce women from virtue, advance them in it. Let her that is amorous, place her love upon him who is, as the ſpouſe tells us, Cant. v. 10. *the chiefeſt among ten thouſand*; ſhe that is angry, turn her edge againſt her ſins; ſhe that is haughty, diſdain the Devil's drudgery; ſhe that is fearful, dread him who *can deſtroy both body and ſoul in hell*, Mat. x. 28. and ſhe that is ſad, reſerve her tears for her penitential offices. Thus may they conſecrate even their infirmities; and though they cannot deify, or erect temples to them, as the Romans did to their paſſions, nay their diſeaſes; yet after they are thus cleanſed, they may ſacrifice them as the Jews did the clean beaſts in the tabernacle. Only irreligion and profaneneſs is exempt from this privilege, no water of purification can cleanſe it, or make it ſerviceable in the temple; that like the ſpoils of Jericho, is ſo execrable, that it muſt be devoted to deſtruction, as *an accurſed thing*, Joſ. vi. 17. For though God does not deſpiſe the work of his own hands, hath ſo much kindneſs to his creatures, that he endeavours

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to reduce all our native inclinations to their primitive rectitude; and therefore does not abolish, but purify them; yet atheism is none of those; it is a counter-blast from hell, in opposition to that mighty wind in which the Holy Spirit descended. Though the subject in which it subsists may be reformed, the person may turn christian, and the wit that maintained its blasphemous paradoxes may be converted to holier uses: yet the quality itself is capable of no such happy metamorphosis; that must be extirpated, for it cannot be made tributary. Which shews how transcendent an ill that is which cannot be converted to good. Even that omnipotence which can out of the very stones raise children to Abraham, attempts not any transmutation of this: which ought therefore to possess all hearts with a detestation of it, and advance them in an earnest pursuit of all the parts of piety.

12. And that is it which I would now once more, as a farewel exhortation, commend to my female readers, as that which virtually contains all other accomplishments. It is that pearl in the gospel for which they may part with all, and make a good bargain too. *The*

fear

fear of the Lord is the beginning of wiſdom, ſays the wiſeſt of men, *Prov.* i. 7. and by his experience he ſhews that it is the compleating end of it too; for he no ſooner declined from that, but he grew to dotage and diſhonour. Let all thoſe therefore to whom God has diſpenſed an outward affluence, given them a viſible ſplendor in the eyes of the world, be careful to ſecure to themſelves *that honour which comes from God only*, John v. 44. unite their ſouls to that ſupreme majeſty who is the fountain of true honour: who in his beſtowing the crown of righteouſneſs proceeds by the ſame meaſures by which he diſpoſed the crown of *Iſrael*; when he avowed to *Samuel* that he *looked not on the outward appearance but beheld the heart*, 1 Sam. xvi. 7. If God ſee not his own image there, all the beauty and gaiety of the outward form is deſpicable in his eyes, like the apples of *Sodom* only a kind of painted duſt. But if piety be firmly rooted there, they then become like the king's daughter, *all glorious within* too; a much more valuable bravery than the *garment of needle work and veſture of gold*, Pſalm xlv. 14. And this is it that muſt enter them into the king's *palace*, into that *new Jeruſalem*, where they ſhall not wear,

wear, but inhabit *pearls* and *gems*, Rev. xxi. 19, 21. be beautiful without the help of art or nature, by the mere reflexion of the divine brightneſs; be all that their then enlarged comprehenſions can wiſh, and infinitely more than they can here imagine.

FINIS.

wear, but inhabit [illegible] and gems, Rev. xxi. 19, 21. be beautified [illegible] the help of art or nature, by the [illegible]ion of the divine brightness; be all [illegible] their then enlarged comprehensions can will, and infinitely more than they can here imagine.